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Part 1 - Journey to the Royal Capital

Satou's here. There was a time when I shut myself in my room after I had a fight with my parents during my middle-school days, but it only lasted for three days. I think you need serious resolution and aptitude in order to do that.

◇

"I am very honored to be in the presence of Lord Duke Bishtal."
"Umu, I'm glad to see Sir Jeril is in good health."

With the [Crimson Nobleman] Jeril first on the list, only the people who are of nobility are summoned to this royal suite.
Despite the fact that other people besides us who have received the Mithril plate cannot be called commoners even though they're going to be bestowed the peerage in the royal capital.
Although besides Sir Jeril who is a baronet, we're all either only honorary nobles or children of nobles.

Duke Bishtal who has summoned us is a middle-aged man with stern face and a hook nose like General Eltal, his uncle.
I stole a glance at his face while kneeling down like everyone else.

The other party is not a royalty so there should be no need to kneel down, but perhaps it was because his lineage as a cousin of the king, or due to his influence, everyone had kneeled down once they entered the room and waited for him, so I followed them out of courtesy like a Japanese man would.

After he's done talking with Jeril, he begins to congratulate the children of nobles who have defeated the [Floormasters] in turns.
Then, he congratulates the honorary nobles somewhat more plainly than with the noble children before, and then it's my turn as the last one.

Judging from his glare, it feels like he's harboring ill will toward me.

"I enjoyed your acrobatic show earlier. Aren't you looking more like a street performer than an explorer today?"

Lady Karina would have gone into a rage if he heard him saying it an 'acrobatic'.
However, doing it with Mia's performance in the background while Pochi and Tama are dancing, touring around the country like that sounds very fun.
It's probably because I thought that--

"That sounds fun indeed. Allow us to hold a tour in Lord Duke's castle town if we cease the explorer business."

--that I involuntarily said so, making the Duke's face became sullen.

He might have perceived my honest thought as a snark since he most likely had said his words with sarcasm.
The cliche here should be him grandly sneering, "You low life upstart, blah, blah, blah", but...

"It seems Oyugock Dukedom intends to nominate you to be a Shiga Eight Swords, but they are not existences that should be taken lightly by someone without real ability to back him up."

The Duke glances to Sir Jeril and nods seriously.
I see, he's going to recommend Sir Jeril to become a Shiga Eight Swords to oppose Duke Oyugock huh.

If I were to become a Shiga Eight Swords by mistake, let alone tour, it would even hinder me from raising the girls' level.
And also, please stop treating me as a piece in your power struggle.

It'd be troubling if I say some careless remark and he deemed me as an enemy.
For the time being, in order to cover my remark earlier, I responded neutrally with, "Thank you very much for Lord Duke's warning."

If sparks seem like it's going to fly, it might be good to make a master swordsman called [Musashi] or maybe [Lancelot] appear and forcefully take the seat of Shiga Eight Swords.
If it goes well, I can just make the mysterious master swordsman go challenge a dragon and die tragically.
Then Jeril can take the seat peacefully afterward.

Still, even if he's saying it because I'm a piece of his political opponent, I think arbitrarily deciding a Mithril explorer to be [of without real ability] is a bit unreasonable....

◇

"Eh~, why don't you seriously become a Shiga Eight Swords?"
"Why should I."

I told the circumstances at the royal suite to Arisa.
Lulu is in the kitchen, Pochi and Tama have gone to Lady Karina's room, they're not here.

Just in case, I've instructed them to contact me if some strange guy approached them.

"What are you saying. You'd be treated as an Earl equaling prime ministers if you became a Shiga Eight Swords you know?"
"I'm not interested in such position."

If I really wanted the peerage, I could have asked the king as Nanashi, and, even though Duchy is impossible, he's probably going to easily grant Earldom at least.
In the first place, there's no merit for me even if I become an upper noble.

"Kah~~. Mou! Why are you so not-greedy like that! If you're a man, you should have aimed

to become successful in life after coming to another world and obtaining cheat right? If you became an earl, you could make as many noble girls as you like become your brides you know?"
"Calm down, Arisa."

Arisa presses on me while insisting on something incomprehensible.
Arisa tends to run wild when it has to do with the [Promise]. She usually says that she likes me, but I wonder if she's fine with other girls becoming my brides?

It was Mia who got upset from that Arisa's remark.

"Affair is no good you know. Absolutely you know? There are already enough brides anyway. It's at full capacity you know?"
"Sorry Mia! I, I'm sorry okay, I'm reflecting on itt~~"

Arisa is getting flinched from Mia's menacing look.
I didn't ask who the brides are since it'd only be a boomerang for me.

By the way, Nana who was in the same room didn't hear my story since she was absorbed in playing [Ayatori] with Shiro and Crow.

When I entered the room, Shiro and Crow were already inside like it was natural.
I've decided to let them go with us since the Airship has embarked already.
Even though they have wings, it seems flying from an airship requires special training, so it was difficult for me to say [Return them].
In case of Nana, punishment should mean banning the once-in-a-week magic power supplement, but the loss is too big for me myself so I'll think about other ways.

Oops, my thought has deviated for a bit.

Liza didn't state any particular opinion, but it seems she wants me to become a Shiga Eight Swords like Arisa.

Rather, I think Liza is more suited to become a Shiga Eight Swords. She should be stronger than the third prince who was a Shiga Eight Swords at least.
Pochi and Tama have also become stronger than the third prince, but these two are still young, such position is probably too early for them.

◇

"I'mback~?"
"I'm back, nanoresu."

Pochi and Tama came back while looking tired.

"How was Karina-sama?"
"Shut-inin~"
"She doesn't want to get out of the room nodesu!"

I put the reserved whale jerky to Pochi and Tama who have plopped themselves on the sofa as thanks.
These are the last from the 100-kilo jerky I've made before, I should make sure to make more.

"T-this is!"
"Whale Jer~ ky~"
"Energy times 100 nanodesu!"

The two jump up while having the jerkies on their mouths, and then take the 'shupin' pose.
This kinda pose doesn't go well with the formal dresses they're wearing.

--It's cute though.

"Now, then--"
"Are you going to Oppai-san's place?"

--No, I don't intend to though?

I almost said so, but I wisely did not.

I guess leaving Lady Karina alone while she's being like that is cruel.
I had thought of socializing with the other Mithril explorers together with everyone on this occasion, but let's postpone that.

"You're right. After giving her a bit more time, I'll go see her condition."

Liza stood up when some guests knocked the door.
The two people who have come are Lady Karina's attendants, maid Erina and Newbie-chan.
For some reason, Newbie-chan is an unfortunate girl whom no one calls with her name, but since the person herself doesn't seem to mind, I'll call her so until Erina refers her with her name.

"Chevalier-sama, please help~"
"Please!"

The two bow their heads and beg me to do something about Lady Karina who's shut herself in her room. I don't think that we should be that worried, but according to these girls, this seems to be an abnormal situation.

"She didn't come out of her room even after we put the plate with Karages that Lulu-san had made in front of the room you know?"

Erina, you're the only one who would come out with that.
I ignore the presences of Pochi, Tama, and in addition, Liza, who are nodding.

By the way, Liza, and Pochi who were in chaos during the blimp travel are in their usual states, maybe they're not afraid because the airship doesn't shake that much.

Or it might be because they've experienced various acrobatic battles in the labyrinth.
Well, our current girls probably would come out alive even if they fell from the airship by utilizing Magic Edge Cannon or magic somehow.

"I mean, after getting scolded by Consul Nina, and soundly beaten by Captain Zotor, she became lively again from the smell of karages made by Head-chef Gelt! Yet now~"

Erina presses on me while looking desperate.
I understand that you're worried about Lady Karina, but please stop pressing your flat chest on my arm that you've been doing since awhile ago. Even Newbie-chan's ended up imitating you, see.

"Guilty."
"Hey now, there's no need to stick so much right."

Arisa and Mia tear the two from my arms.

We're going to Lady Karina's room as invited by the two, postponing the plan to listen to the interesting episodes of the other Mithril explorers.

◇

"Karina-sama, I have heard that you lie sick on your bed, how are you feeling?"

I knock on the door of the room where Lady Karina is shutting herself.
There's no answer of course.

Now then, what should I do.

"Let's go with the Amano-iwato operation!"[W]

"Amano-iwato?"
"That's right! There's a myth about a shut-in Goddess in the world of Hero-sama! Let's perform the same operation that lured that Goddess out!"

Arisa took an imposing stance while breathing wildly on top of the table, but then she became small after Liza scolded her for bad manner.

In order to prepare the banquet, Arisa took everyone along to the kitchen where Lulu was.

However, doing a banquet in front of the room of someone who's seriously feeling down seems like it'll only make her become an obstinate shut-in...

I've gotten myself lost in thought in front of Lady Karina's bedroom door.

Part 2 - Journey to the Royal Capital (2)

Satou's here. The story of Amaterasu-Oomikami hiding in the cave behind a rock is famous. Though I think there aren't many people who know about the hidden reason as to why the goddess hid herself in the cave.

◇

Now then, I'd have liked to see it if Nana acted as the Ame-no-Uzume, but judging from the usual pattern, it's probably going to be Arisa or the other little girl member.

I stand up without hesitation and step forward before the closed door that separates us from Lady Karina.

I cut off sounds with wind magic, and then use [Clairvoyance] and [Magic Hand] magic at the same time to unlock the door with the key from the other side.
It's scary if this combo is used to do crime, but if someone can use [Wind Magic], [Space Magic], and [Force Magic], they should be able to succeed in life even without becoming a criminal.

I entered the bedroom while thinking such a trivial thing.

Raka is flickering blue light on the table.
It's quite rare for Lady Karina to not wear Raka. She usually even wears it during her sleep....

Judging from Raka's flickering state, it probably had noticed my intrusion, but since Lady Karina didn't warn him, it's guarding her silently.

Unfortunately--err, fortunately, Lady Karina is still wearing the clothes from before, lying her face down on the bed, sulking.
No, checking the map, she isn't in [Sleeping] state, so she's still awake.

"Karina-sama, I've heard that you weren't feeling well, how are you feeling now?"

I whisper to Lady Karina near the bedside.
Lady Karina who's surprised jumps out of the bed and puts her back on the board that's on the wide bed.

Oops, I approached her silently since I had used magic to erase sound when I unlocked the door....
Let's feign ignorance.

"Did I surprise you?"

Lady Karina's face has inconspicuously reddened while her mouth is opening and closing, the area around her eyes look red.
....She was really surprised huh.

Looks like she was frustrated about losing, her moist eyes are violently sexy.
I float Aze-san in my mind to hold back my desire.

"Please be still."
"...Yes...."

While pretending to wipe the area around her eyes with a handkerchief, I heal it with magic.
It's good now.

Lady Karina has closed her eyes, and Raka shouldn't be able to see me invoking magic since my body is in the way, so it should be fine.

However, Lady Karina is still closing her eyes even after I've done wiping her eyes.

--She's too vulnerable.
I'm a carnivore-type man after all, so I could end up kissing and pushing you down you know?

"I've wiped your eyes. It's alright to open them now."

After opening and closing her mouth for a moment, Lady Karina looks at me, dumbfounded.
She matches eyes with mine and seems to be dissatisfied about something, and then she puffs her cheeks.

"Satou is mean desuwa!"

The pillow thrown by Lady Karina hits my face.

◇

"It's the arrival of the dish nodesu!"
"Karage mountains~?"

Pochi and Tama jumped into the room while saying so.
They're spreading sweet atmosphere while I'm being troubled as to how to handle the sullen Lady Karina, so they've honestly saved me.

"Un, it smells nice."
"Snatching food is no good nanodesu!"

Pochi scolded me when I was going to taste the dish.

"It's just food tasting, tasting."
"It can't be helped if it's tasting nodesu."
"Tama is tasting too~"
"Pochi will also not hesiteta to taste it nodesu."

Pochi, that should be [Hesitate].
I take the karage from the plate that Tama's holding and then put them into Pochi's and

Tama's mouth.
Next, I put one into mine.

Lulu has become even more skilled. Isn't she already better than me with my maximum cooking skill?

Since Lady Karina beside me was looking enviously at Pochi and Tama, I also present one into her mouth that's opened slightly.

Maybe it's because I've put the karage into her mouth so suddenly, she's protesting while chewing it.
The reason why she doesn't yield, though, is probably because the karage that's in her mouth has no sin.

And then, Mia and Arisa who came a bit later returned here.
The two are wearing mantles that cover their whole bodies even though it's hot. I'm afraid to ask what are they wearing inside the mantle.

"Guilty."

Mia reacted by condemning guilty after looking at the atmosphere released by Lady Karina, but the ones that should be deemed guilty are you girls.

"Ara, you've already lured Oppa--Karina-sama out of her room?"

Arisa asked, although with slightly bad wording.
I wholeheartedly ignore the turbulent words from Arisa and Mia who are muttering in whispers, "Our bewitching clothes gone to waste", "Night", "Y, yeah you're right!"

Now then, I guess we might as well start the party?

◇

"Fumu, as expected of the works of the best labyrinth city chef."
"Delicious. I would have never thought that I'd be treated to the Phantom Chef's dishes in the airship."

The mithril explorers easily raised their voices of admiration once they tasted the party dishes Lulu had made.
We've invited the explorers who are in the dining hall and start a party since Lulu had made many dishes.
There were more people who participated that I had anticipated, so I had added more with the cooperation of the airship's kitchen staff.

Explorers who ride the airship are mostly males, but there are also 7-8 female explorers among them.

I thought that Lady Karina would make some friends with them since they were of the same

female explorers, but my expectation was a miss.
Erina and Newbie-chan are forming a protective wall around her in one corner of the table, while she's continuing to eat.

The male explorers who are captivated by the demonic breasts and her beauty have just swarmed her just awhile ago, but since Lady Karina gets frightened when they approach her en masse, I've become stuck to be the one who ensure that no more than two people can approach her at a time, like a manager.
After some extent, it seems the male explorers perceived that Lady Karina was not interested, so they changed their target to the waitresses.

Nana is also surrounded by the male explorers, but she's handling it in "my pace" mode like usual. Looks like they're not experienced enough to break through Nana's impregnableness guard.

In exchange of the men who had disappeared, I introduced Lady Karina to the female explorers whom I had befriended during the party, but it didn't go well since they couldn't have a conversation for long.

I wanted to ask her why did she act so prickly even though the other parties had favorable impression about her during this occasion.
I was thankful that the female explorers didn't feel too offended even thought they had wry smiles.

◇

In one corner of the dining hall that's not too big, Mia begins her performance.
Looks like one of the explorers has asked her, she's playing the famous tune that's used for ballroom dancing in Shiga Kingdom.

The male and female explorers have begun dancing to the tune.
Everyone of them seems unused to it, maybe they never practice much.

"Please don't laugh at us. We are all commoners unlike Sir Pendragon and Jeril. Everyone wants to practice before we arrive at the Royal Capital."
"I won't laugh. Everyone is a beginner at the beginning."

The thirty-year old female explorer who was talking with Lady Karina earlier covered for the explorers who were dancing awkwardly.
They should be invited to parties from various nobles once they arrive at the Royal Capital. They're probably practicing the social dancing in order not to embarrass themselves when that happens.

This is just right.
I might as well have Lady Karina practice during this time.

"Now, Karina-sama. Let me have this dance."
"I-I won't dance."

"That is not good. Furthermore, even if you step on my foot here, no one will scold, laugh or be disappointed at you."
"But...."

I take the hand of Lady Karina who's shrinking back.

"I shall exercise my right as the winner now."

I exercise the right and take Lady Karina to the space where we can dance.
Arisa and the others protested, but they consented after I said that they could change place with Lady Karina once her dance practice is over.
After Lady Karina, the next one is going to be Lulu who has worked the hardest for this party.

"Karina-sama, please lean your body a bit more."
"Uu, i-it's embarassing desuwa."

I'm getting a bit stimulated to see Lady Karina being shy, but I have to concentrate teaching her to dance now.

Concentrate Satou.
You must not concentrate on the pair of miracles that are touching chest.

You cannot.

I teach Lady Karina how to dance while evading Mia's sharp glances.

"That's right. You're pretty good."
"...N, no way."

I praise her every time she's become better even a bit to remove her doubt.

"Don't be preoccupied with the footsteps you can't see. Please remember your footworks during battles."
"L-like this?"
"Yes, like that."

Lady Karina can't check her footsteps during the dance because of her all-to-great breasts. Her worries seems to increase due to that.
She's getting better little by little after I informed her to mix the steps with close combat footworks.

The dance cannot be said to be elegant, but it's a speedy sharp dance.
She just has to accumulate experiences afterward.

After Lady Karina, I dance with Lulu and our other girls, and then going with the flow, with Erina, Newbie-chan, and even the female explorers.

For some reason, in the end, I ended up instructing the male explorers the way to dance.

It was slightly hard, but getting the explorers indebted to me with only this is a cheap price to pay.

Just that, I was dumbfounded to see Arisa began breathing roughly when I became the partner of the male explorers as a way to teach them the dance steps.

◇

The airship we're riding has passed through the last rough mountains before the Royal Capital without any particular flying monsters attacking.

Now then, soon it's the Royal Capital.

Part 3 - Journey to the Royal Capital (3)

Satou's here. I like the blooming field of milkvetch flower that happens before the rice-planting. My countryside grows green soybeans instead of milkvetch flowers though, so I've only ever seen such elegant scenery from the window of a train.

◇

"Haa, this is amazing."
"Beautiful."
"Field~?"
"Lots, lots of little blue flowers nanodesu!"

I've brought everyone to the observatory dome since I've been told that the scenery is amazing after the airship has passed the rough spot.
Sure enough, it was crowded, but our youth troupe slipped through the gaps between people and arrived before the window.

"Heya, Sir Pendragon. You can change with us since we've enjoyed it already."
"Do show it to the girls too. It's quite a rare spectacle y'know."

The male explorers whom I helped with the dancing practice yesterday open a spot for us.
I thank them and take Lulu and the others to the front.

"It's amazing."
"It's really beautiful. I wonder if that's a prairie?"
"It's probably a cultivated land, so I conjecture. The blue color on the surface are blue milkvetch flowers, so I report."
"Beautifll~"
"Haa"

Liza and Nana are calm, but the other members admire the scenery once they see it. Crow is rarely acting like their age.

All of the vast area that can be seen from the airship is covered in blue flowers.
There are some woods and hamlets here and there too of course, however they look like nothing but art objects that decorate the deep blue carpet.

This scene continues on until we reach the Royal Capital. I knew that this was the largest grain-producing area in the kingdom, but I wasn't even sure they would raise flowers and never thought that it would be this different than what I had expected.
This area was of the tawny color of the fallow when I passed through here with Flash Drive, so I had arbitrarily thought so.

Some band has started playing solemn music on the stage near the wall in the observatory dome, it seems they're doing a performance.

I yield my ears to the tune and enjoy the scene that can only be seen now.
Before I knew it, Lulu who's mesmerized has entrusted herself to my arm.

The two maids of Lady Karina are currently having a hard fight in order to dress Lady Karina up, so the three of them are not here.
This scenery will continue for a while, so they probably won't miss and regret it.

◇

"Sparkling~?"

Tama said so when we were quenching our throat on the drinking corner of the observatory dome.

"What's wrong?"
"It's『Sparkling』over there~"

I look at where Tama is pointing, but only the equilibrium wing and the large magic engine that extend from the hull are over there.
It might be just a reflection of something, but since the one who said it was Tama, I'm bothered.

I operate the map to check the place that Tama's pointed.
There are several magicians and engineers near the large magic engine, but that's as usual.

The one that's not usual is on the narrow interconnection of the equilibrium wing.
--For some reason, there's a retainer of Duke Bishtal over there.

"This time, it's sparkling over there nodesu!"
"Master, I saw it too. I feel some kind of agitating presence although it might be a coincidence."

This time it's not only Tama, Pochi and Liza seems to have seen it too.
The direction is completely different though.

The two are looking at the direction the airship is heading.
I operate the map and check on the place the beastkin girls indicate.

The beastkin girls don't seem able to see it, so I put my hand like a visor and look at the scenery outside the window.
The windows of this airship are transparent, but they were made with mysterious conductive material from monster, so even I don't know the composition myself.
Although it's not usable for armor, it's unexpectedly sturdy, and it doesn't become sharp pieces when broken, so I've made use of them during the airship construction.

There's a structure that looks like a combination of a French castle and a fort at the place the beastkin girls have pointed.
When I checked the detail, it was said to be the hunting mansion of Marquis Lloyd. I

remember about the tempura we ate together in the Duchy Capital when I see his name.

Whoops, rather than that, there's something strange.

A hunting mansion right in the middle of cultivated land is already quite strange, but the people inside the mansion are even stranger.
The low ranked servants like the maids and manservants are under Marquis Lloyd, but for some reaosn, there are also several retainers of Duke Bishtal.

There are even monsters in the mansion's basement.
Their title is [Tamed] so they're probably minions of the Tamer people nearby, but the line-up is strange, there are upper level 20s Lance Beetles, lower level 20s Canon Toads and Rocket Trees.
It's as if they've been prepared for anti-aircraft battles.
Moreover there are nearly 30 of them, they're probably able to besiege a small country that only has one city. It's not enough to cause coup d'etat in Shiga Kingdom, but it should be able to shoot down a mere airship.

However, there's something even more dangerous in another layer underground--

"Satou, Raka found some suspicious light desuwa."
『Umu, I hope it's just an unfounded fear, but the light reflection looks like it's used as signals.』

Lady Karina and Raka who are exposed to wind on the deck brought such information to me.
I already know it, but there's no need to point that out.

"I saw it too y'see. Lord Duke is riding this airship after all, something's stink of burn."

A Mithril explorer that's appeared from behind Lady Karina--a middle-aged man called Marmot the scout or something, says so.
I feel weird hearing the word, [Kinakusai] in a world that's abandoned gunpowder.

"Arisa, take everyone along to put on the equipment."

In order to prepare for the worst case scenario, I order everyone to put on their public equipment.

"Okkey. The B-type one is fine right?"
"Yeah, you can put on either the usual or the lovely one whichever you want."
"Aye aye sir. Let's go everyone!"
"Aye~" "Nanodesu!"

The B-type thing that Arisa's talked about is the finest one among the public equipment. Since this isn't the time to use the A-type equipment that were used during the fight with the floor master and the unused hidden equipment, I've given them permission to use the next best one.

By the way, the [Lovely] one is the showy equipment for the parade. Its performance is no different from the usual B-type equipment.

Marmot-shi ran to the bridge with his friends.

◇

Liza and I didn't go back to change our clothes.

If the mastermind behind the tamed monsters earlier aims to shoot down this airship, we're going to enter the firing range of the tamed monsters soon.
The Rocket Trees seem to be monsters that look like an anti-aircraft monster, so we can't be careless.

Although it's strange for the retainers of Duke Bishtal to shoot down the airship that the Duke himself is riding, there's a possibility that we've been rolled up in a family feud.
In that case, though it's not like I don't understand the reason why Marquis Lloyd who is his political opponent participates in the attack, that carefree person doesn't seem to be someone who will partake in an assassination.

Well, I better postpone thinking about this for later.
Right now I have to prioritize the way to cope with the crisis that might be drawing near. It'd end as a funny story if it was just an unfounded fear, but let's continue the preparation for now.

I start the [Signal] magic while sitting on the seat.

The luminous dots on the top of the Hunting Mansion I've locked one have started moving.
Looks like they're guilty as charged.

--Sending compact code.

This is an airship that I've made myself.
I have insurances in case of emergency.

--I secure the superlative right to operate the airship via the backdoor.

I wanted to end this without using it if possible, but it doesn't seem to be so.
I send information about the tamed monsters from my map to the Airship searching crystal.
The radar of this ship shouldn't have found them yet.

Slightly later, the siren of the observatory dome begins resounding.

Our girls enter the room while being surprised with the loud sound of the siren.
My crisis perception reacts lightly right at that time.

On the ground, five luminous red dots have begun to move.
Judging from the speed, it's probably the Rocket Trees.

The airship seems to be turning in an effort to evade the monsters, but there's a high possibility that it can't.
Urgent broadcasts are coming from the speaking tube.

『Relaying to all members, please carry out the emergency maneuver--』
『--grab the nearest handrail if you don't want to die!』

The angry voice of a man who seems to be the captain buried the trembling voice of a woman.
The airship's hull has begun to skid at the same time as that angry voice.

With [Magic Hands], I support every powerless member starting from Arisa.

"Ukkyaa"
"Falling~?"
"It's critically dangerous nodesu!"
"Close your mouth. You'll bite your tongue."

Starting from Arisa, everyone unanimously started to make noise, but Liza quickly reined them.
Lulu and Mia have clung to my arms without letting any voice out. On our side, there's Nana who looks so happy hugging Shiro and Crow.

At first, people in the observatory dome could bear the skidding, but then several people have been separated from the handrail after a sudden acceleration accompanied with boom sound.
They probably have used the acceleration tube that I've prepared for making sudden evasion.

I select the commoners who seem likely to get injured if they hit the wall among the people who are flying like they are in zero gravity in the observatory room, and use [Magic Hand] close to the wall to kill their momentum.
The Mithril explorers would only feel some pain from this much, so I left them alone.

Five Rocket Trees are flying away outside the window.
Looks like the airship has successfully evaded, but the enemies' jet propulsion should only last for 30 seconds. The enemies will probably change their course and come attacking again.

I wish the gun turrets on both side of the warship do their roles, but it seems the starboard gunman has fainted from the sudden maneuver just now. He's probably hit his head somewhere.
The port gunman is still well, but he shouldn't be able to hit the Rocket Trees considering the location, the hull is obstructing them.

I use the superlative right that I've secured and rotate the starboard gun turret.
I'd like to attack them by linking the gun turrets with the map like with Aegis[W], but

unfortunately I haven't constructed such system yet.

I calculate the trajectory using the map and the cannon's angle and begin the remote bombardment.
The magic-powered artillery that can fire three shots every second chases after the five Rocket Trees, painting the sky red.

I was able to shoot down all five monsters before the gun barrel got burnt out.
I make the port gun turret to open fire toward the Rocket Trees that hadn't takeoff and the Lance Beetles.

It seems the distance is too far, they're all near-hit shots.

The birdkins who have taken off from the lower rank join together into a rank to intercept the enemies. They're all only upper level 10s people equipped with fire wands, so I'm unsure they can intercept the Lance Beetles.

The slanting airship has corrected its position, so I release Lulu and the others who were hugging me.
The voice of the man from before flowed out of the speaking tube.

『This is the Captain's speaking. I request the cooperation of magicians in this airship. Please intercept the monsters approaching this airship.』

Now then, looks like it's time for our turn.

Part 4 - Journey to the Royal Capital (4)

Satou's here. It seems stubborn people exist no matter the era of the world. I respect people who live dirtily when it's a matter of life and death, but please stop struggling in order to avoid responsibility.

◇

I release the spirit light that I have sealed.
That line sounds like something said from the mouth of a chuunibyou patient, but I can't help it since it's the truth. When I release the suppressed spirit light, spirits from the surrounding and the ground surface gather to me with dreadful speed.
There's no need for me to hold back since only Mia and me have the Spirit Seer skill in this airship.

"Satou?"

I nod at Mia who's asking me.
I hold Mia's arm that she's held up. Apparently, she's guessed my intention.

"H-hey!"

Arisa is going to ask us while panicking about something, but it seems she's understood what we're trying to do after hearing Mia who's started chanting a spell of spirit magic.

"Geh, that spell is very bad. Pochi, Tama, let's hurry! Mia will take all the spotlight if it keeps up!"
"I don't really understand, but let's hurry nodesu!"
"Agreement accepted~?"

Arisa dashes to the deck with Pochi and Tama on both flanks.

"Nana and Lulu, I'm sorry, but please stay here and keep Karina-sama and the others from going out to the deck."
"Yes, Master."
"U-um. D-do we not need the Accelerated Cannon?"
"Un, the monsters this time are all small fish, so it's going to end with Mia's magic."

Lulu's come asking, but the damage on the surface would be terrible if she uses the Accelerated Cannon.
I tell so to Lulu who looks anxious, and then I go to the deck while carrying Mia with princess carry.

I decided to pretend that I didn't hear Karina-sama who had her arms pinned behind her back by Lulu shouted "Release me".

◇

On the deck, the Mithril explorers who are strangely in high spirits are waiting for the Lance Beetles that are approaching from afar.

It seems the birdkins unit that have been deployed earlier isn't for intercepting the Lance Beetles, they're going to suppress the tamers at the castle fort.
That should be the correct decision considering the fighting force on the airship.

"Coming~?"
"They're small and fast nodesu."
"Aim well you two."

The beastkin girls intercept the three cannon balls shot by the Cannon Toads flying between the Lance Beetles with a shuriken, a long toothpick, and a javelin.

"Au, even though it hit..."
"Le~ave the rest to me!"

The long toothpick thrown by Pochi was broken by the cannon ball due to the difference in mass.
And then the fire balls shot by Arisa and several people with fire wands wrap the cannon ball up. The cannon ball that's been scratched by Pochi's toothpick is scattered away by the fire balls.

Fire wand can be shot just by supplying it with magic power, it's also faster than the normal spell since it doesn't need to be chant.
The attack power is also relatively good, so there are more demands for fire wands and lightning wands than scrolls from the military.

"Arisa. I need you to do something."
"Okkey~, doesn't seem like I'll get to show off, so you want me to encourage everyone with my beautiful voice?"
"No, let's leave that for when the next opportunity arises--"

I ask Arisa to do more important mission than dealing with the small fish. Incidentally, I also instructed Tama do a Ninja errand. Pochi and Liza are to protect us.

Mia who was chanting the spell with utmost effort during those conversations finally completes it.

"...■■■ Magic Wind King Creation (Create Garuda)"

An artificial spirit that looks like a birdman with half-transparent golden body, wearing a shining crown appears.
It's a being of the same rank as the one that Aze-san had summoned once, Behemoth.

I use [Magic Power Transfer] to recover Mia who has lost most of her magic power.

"Ooh, what is that?"

"Is it a new enemy?!"
"Shield! Protect our friends!　■■■ Diamond Shield Activate!"

The Mithril explorers who are surprised with the sudden appearance of the artificial spirit have changed their aim to Garuda, so I solve the misunderstanding and apologize in a hurry.

I nod to Mia who's looking at me and permit her to attack the Lance Beetles.

"Annihilate."

Abiding Mia's words, Garuda spreads its wings in stillness while ignoring the aerodynamic force, the tip of the feathers on its wings transform like it's CG-morphing and then they extend toward the Lance Beetles, attacking them.
Several golden feathers become long and thin like threads and extend, piercing the Lance Beetles like it's wrapping them, and then cut them into small pieces.

"Tremendous...."
"That's the summoning magic that defeated the floormaster huh."

Some questionable misunderstanding are mixed in among the comments.
Sorry but accompanying them is for later.

Right when the birdkin unit has arrived at the fort, an Anomalocaris-like monster called Flying Centipede breaks open the fort's gate from the inside, showing itself.

Unlike the tamed monsters earlier, this one isn't tamed.
It was just a sleeping monster that had [Sleeping] status. Just how did they bring it into the fort....

"Mia."
"Nn."

Garuda who's received Mia's order attacks the Flying Centiped as quick as a bird of prey.
The flying centipede that's preparing to attack the birdkins on the surrounding sway its wings and rise in the air in a swimming-like motion.

"I've fought that monster before, and it has a long-range attack called『Mystic Ray』. We should be fine, but it can be dangerous for the airship, so keep it from getting close."

I've never actually fought the Flying Centipede. I've made it like that since the source of information is the map.
I'm fine with Mia, but we're in a situation where there are explorers around us.

"Use it?"
"No, just use the golden feathers to torment it."
"Nn."

Mia was talking about the trump card that greater artificial spirits posses.

In case of Garuda, it's a big-scale technique called [Tempest], but on top of having power, it's too showy so I refrained from doing it.

I'll leave the best part to the magicians who are chanting spells with all their might.

"Can you lift and make it stand still in the air higher than the airship."
"Will do."

Garuda that howls in accordance to Mia's instruction stitches the Flying Centipede, stopping its track dead in the air.
The Flying Centipede was shooting some suspicious serrated rays once in a while, but it never reached here even once since it was wrapped in Garuda's golden feathers.

And then the magicians have finished chanting.
In reality, the Flying Centipede has lost 60% of its health, and it's going to end in 2-3 minutes even if we leave it alone, but let's turn the last part over to them since it's conscious.

"Sir Pendragon. The preparation is complete. Please make that summon beast fall back."
"There's no problem. Shoot it along with the summon beast."

I answered so to the explorers guarding the magicians.
An artificial spirit will just turn back into small spirits even if its health becomes zero.

"....■■■ Long-range Flame Spears"

Several spears of swirling flame drill through the Flying Centipede.
Garuda seems to have resistance against fire, the flame disappears the moment it touches Garuda.

"....■■ Holy Pile"
"....■■■■ Divine Hammer"

Slightly later, a huge blue stake pierces the Flying Centipede, and then a shining hammer that appears beside it crushes the monster into pieces.

The deck is wrapped in shouts of joy.

Lady Karina who has finally been released jumps in, but there's already no enemy for her.
Seeing her stamping her feet in frustration is a sight for sore eyes, but I wish she stops since that's not mature.
I ask Nana who has appeared a bit later to do some business.

Mia beside me sends Garuda home.

Since the artificial spirit was created, I had thought that it should be called cancellation instead, but it was [Sending Home] since the non-elemental spirits that had been dissolved were returning to where they came from.
Aze-san was rarely talking about it passionately.

That kind of Aze-san was rare and nice.

Maybe because I'm thinking such thing, Mia's mood has slightly worsened.

"Mwu."
"Good work Mia."

I give Mia some appreciation and try to release her from the princess carry state, but it doesn't seem like she'll get down.

"Mia?"
"I'm tired."

It can't be helped then.
Arisa is also often like this after she's used unique skill, doing this once in a while is alright.

◇

I mislead other people into thinking that the Garuda summon is the secret skill of the elves.
The magicians who have heard the spirit magic chanting mentioned, "It's different from Sebelkea-dono's magic, but the phoneme is similar with the spell from the ancient document", which helped reinforced the story.

I make them promise to let me see that ancient document when we get back to the Labyrinth City of course.
The compensation for that is the Face Tree's branches that I have stocked a lot in the storage.
Apparently it seems to be a material for making wands.

Now then, leaving aside those trivial things, let's get back to our present situation.

One of the gun turret is dead, but there's no more obstacle for the sailing of the ship. The people inside the airship who have been injured are healed by Mia and the other healing magicians, and they've gone back to normal.

Several of the birdkins who searched the fort seemed to have died, but they were able to arrest the majority of the perpetrators.
Several people seems to have escaped, but there's no problem on that front.

Duke Bishtal who's in front of me is yelling toward me and the ship's captain while I'm doing such escapism.
Apparently, he cannot consent to the fact that his retainers have schemed to take his life.

He was playing dumb and said that he didn't know his retainers who were arrested by the birdkin unit, and claimed that it was a trap devised by Duke Oyugock, his political opponent, since they were in the hunting mansion of Marquis Lloyd, Duke Oyugock's subordinate.

"Masita, we're back~"

"Masuta, we have successfully accomplished your command."

Shiro and Crow entered the Royal Suite while flying around.
Nana entered the room with the evidence on her hand before Duke Bishtal could verbally abuse the two.

"Master, we have arrested the thief who was trying to escape."

Nana throws the man she's brought to the floor.

It's the person Shiro and Crow have arrested from my request to Nana earlier.
The two got their flight capability reinforced with Nana's force arte and then arrested the man with my guidance via [Telephone].
Of course, just these two alone would have been dangerous, so the one who actually arrested and restrained the man was Tama who was brought to the ground with Arisa's space magic.

"Ge-Gelf.... Who? That man is!"

The Duke was very surprised to see him he involuntarily muttered his name, but it seems the only one who's heard it was me with the Ear Straining skill.
This man's identity is of a considerably upper rank even among the Duke's subordinates. His title is [Advisor of Young Nobleman].

--That means the Duke's own child instigated this.
I really don't want to get involved in this kind of muddled story.

"This man seems to be the mastermind who was trying to escape from the crime site. Is he an acquaintance of Lord Duke?"
"I don't know this person."

Just as I've expected, he's feigning ignorance, so I push the man to the Captain.

"Is it alright to leave this man to you Captain?"
"Umu, you can entrust him to me."

I watch the duke's state while patting Shiro's and Crow's head.
He looks indignant, but he doesn't seem to be a fool who would take the direct action in this place.

He might try to get rid of the man during the brief time until we arrive at the Royal Capital, but I'll obstruct it stealthily.

The stake is too high for the Duke since that'd mean he has exposed the national airship, the Mithril explorers who are important fighting forces during emergency, and the direct descendant of a lord--Lady Karina--to danger in his family feud.
I'm not interested as to how he can recover from that, but please don't bear grudge toward us who don't have anything to do with it.

In the end, I ended up having to stealthily repulse the assassins hired by the Duke three times. Leaving it to Ninja Tama would be too conspicuous, so I made use of Magic Hands and Mia's artificial spirit, [Elemental Rats].
I feel like I can hear the grinding teeth of the Duke who received the failure report.

Without being concerned with such a human, the airship we're riding has finally entered the airport located in the Royal Capital's outskirt.

Part 5 - Reception

Satou's here. It seems there was a time when they sent telegram with [Sakurasaku (Exam Pass)] or [Sakurachiru (Exam Failure)] to notify the exam result, but since you can guess the result from the envelope's size nowadays, maybe it's become obsolete? It might be revived when they computerized the result's notification.

◇

"T-the Royal Capital is burning..."

Arisa holds her breath beside me.

"Burning~?"
"Where's the fire nodesu?"
"Mwu?"

It's natural for the little girls to be puzzled.
Arisa's cheeks are red. She must have tried to say something poetic and failed.

"Those are sakura, so I state the information."
"Those are sakura? They look just like in the picture book."

Just as Nana and Liza have said, Arisa was talking about the sakura trees that are in full bloom in the Royal Capital.
The highway that goes to the Royal Capital and the road inside the city itself have been colored in sakura color.
Although the blue milkvetch flowers were beautiful, the one over here is gorgeous.

"It's really pretty...."

Lulu was muttering in rapture while being fascinated with the sakura. She's so lovely I almost involuntarily said, "You are many times more beautiful."
Of course I won't say such playboy-like line.

And then the biggest sakura tree in Shiga Kingdom enters our view as the airship circles toward the airport.

"Ugeh, what's that."
"Big~?"
"It's pretty nodesu."
"Nn, pretty."

Arisa is surprised at a big blooming sakura tree that's situated quite close to the royal castle.
The sakura tree that's said to be given by the elves for the Ancient King Yamato is blooming in pink color, painting the white wall of the royal castle.

"It is pretty, but isn't it a bit too big?"
"Guessing from the window size, I report that its size is more than 100 meter big. It's unthinkable that it's 700 years old, so I reason."

Lulu's doubt is reasonable.
A tree that's as big as a royal castle is unthinkable even in my former world.
However--.

"What is strange about it? The world tree is even bigger isn't it?"

Liza is right, the impact from seeing this tree is weak when you've seen the world tree that reaches the sky.

"If you pray under that tree, any wish seems like it'll be fulfilled...."

Since I know the reference, I can only smile wryly to Arisa who's muttering so.
Unfortunately, it's not an un-withering sakura tree.[1]

◇

"Satou, if you're going to sightsee when we've entered the port, invite me!"

Contrary to her words, Lady Karina is posing like she's showing her dressed-up self.
She's certainly beautiful enough to make you hold your breath.

She's spreading charm violent enough that it would have made me involuntarily propose to her if I didn't have Aze-san.
It's a bit vexing, so I first praise Erina and Newbie-chan beside Lady Karina for their effort instead.

"Thank you for your work, must've been hard."
"Yes, it really was.... It'd be nice if Karina-sama dressed up like that everyday."
"W-wait Senpai."

The all-too-serious Newbie-chan is fretting from Erina's disrespectful words.
Lady Karina herself seems like she's waiting for my words, it doesn't seem like she hears outside noise.

I feel slightly mischievous, but I've decided to normally praise Lady Karina who has gone with the trouble of dressing up.

"You are very beautiful, Karina-sama."

Yet, Lady Karina blushed instead, without being able to reply back.
It seems she's not used to praises since she usually wears unfashionable clothes even though the base is good.

I've got to enjoy the wonderful valley peeking from her dress until Lady Karina moves again.

Arisa and Mia are kicking my feet from behind, but please overlook this one since it's just a mere lip service.

◇

The airship has arrived at the airport on the outskirt of the Royal Capital.
We collect our cabin's luggage and gather in the observatory dome once again.

"Waa, there are a lot of people."[2]

"Like ants nanodesu."
"Nn."

Liza reproves Tama for the slightly impolite thing she said.
There's a wide space in the airport, but it's overflowing with people and carriages.

I feel that there are a lot more people than carriages who have come to welcome Duke Bishtal.

The airship slowly lower its altitude, and then the suspension legs gently touch the ground, ending the landing.

『Everyone, please wait in your room or the observation dome. Guides will lead you to leave the ship.』

A female crew speaks via the speaking tube.
There's no need for us to hurry since the first one will be the party of Duke Bishtal anyway, we'll be leaving the last.

When I peek at the ramp from the deck, there's a blue carpet spread from the ramp to the luxurious carriages of the duke house.
--It's not a red carpet huh.

The elite soldier of the duke are on both sides of the carpet, keeping bad people from approaching the blue carpet.
The Duke leads the way with a depressed face, and then 11 ladies follow behind him.
Those women are all the wives of the Duke.

The three women right after the Duke are of the same age as him, but the age of the women continues getting younger behind them, the last one looks as young as Nana.
Checking on the map, she's 17 years old.
I almost reflexively quip, "How many years the gap is."

After the wives, there are seven children of the Duke house who are coming of age this year and the unmarried ones, and then dozens of retainers after them.
Quite a lot of people. Half of the passengers are people related to the Duke.

However, his guards are only the private knights even though someone is aiming for his life.

Even though Jeril and his party would have immediately agreed if he asked them to guard his party.
I guess credible people are more important than their strength.

While I'm thinking of such thing, the carriages that carry the duke and his party form a line going toward the royal castle.

The nobles follow them, since it's going to be us explorers' turn soon, I decided to go to the airship door.

◇

When Jeril and his [Lion's Roar] party show up on the ramp, shrill voices break out from the people who're welcoming them. All of them are young good-looking beautiful women.
Most are calling for the [Crimson Young Noble] Jeril, but when the name of the other members got called, they wave back with a hand holding a handkerchief.

The cheer for the following parties are decreasing little by little, but when we show ourselves, it becomes loud again.

....Why are they all either old men who bring along little girls, or married couples.

When I look closer, they're nobles whom I've met in the Duchy Capital.
Looks like they didn't come to welcome us as Mithril explorers, but they're cordial people who meet us as acquaintances.

I wave my hand back while feeling a bit nostalgic.
There are also some noble and merchant friends from the labyrinth city among them of course.

A Mithril explorer--a middle-aged man called Marmot or something who's got to the tramp seems like he's found someone he knows among the crowd, and points at that someone, showing to his friends.
I ask him since I'm a bit interested.

"Did you see someone famous?"
"Yeah, if I'm not mistaken, that's the chief of Shiga Eight Swords y'see."

I search the map and mark him.
He's quite far, well done noticing him. As expected of the scout of a Mithril explorer party.

Other explorers seem to have noticed it too, noises begin to spread among them.
It's like when a star pro-player appears in Koushien stadium in front of high school baseball players I guess?

The noises change into baseless speculations.
The most numerous one is this--

"He must've come to to invite Jeril."
"I can't think of any other possibility. Maybe he's looking for a successor."
"As expected of Jeril, befitting of our leader!"

Even while being made fun of by the [Lion's Roar] members, Jeril looks full of confidence with a "not bad at all" face.

--It stinks a bit of a flag, so Arisa who's walking beside me is smiling a very bad smile.
The next most numerous speculations are that he's coming to scout me, and that he's coming to scout either of us.

As if he's walking in an uninhabited field, Chief-san is coming straight toward us.
Like when Moses splits the sea, the crowd of people make way for him.

Since Jeril has stopped moving, the other explorers who have descended to the ramp also stop and create a circle.
I personally want to greet the people who welcome us, but since the crowd are obstructing, there's no space to move even if we can move.
No, there's plenty of space in front of us, but I don't want to be someone who can't read the mood and thrust myself there.

The Chief and Jeril are on a straight line from my point of view, so I can only see Jeril's back.
The Chief seems to have appeared from the crowd.

The noise is spreading whenever the Chief come closer to Jeril.
I saw Jeril looking smug from the side for an instant.

The place freeze as the Chief comes one step away.
Like a pulling tide, the noise has disappeared.

The Chief passes Jeril from the side.
He's coming here.

"It can't be, the winner is Sir Pendragon?!"
"But, Young Master can't even use Magic Edge right?"

The noise begins to revive little by little.
And then, I can finally see the figure of the holy knight who's carrying a white pike following him from behind. I understand the Chief's intention when I see his face.

I make a way for the Chief who's come before me.
I'm sorry for Jeril, but I'll be refraining myself from being made a clown like him.

He stopped before us and stated this.

"I am the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords, Zeff Julberg the『Unfalling』. I desire a bout with Liza-dono the『Black Spear』!"

1. Da Capo reference
2. Castle in the Sky reference

Part 6 - Liza's Strength

Satou's here. There's this term, "Muscle-brain", but I think it's better than human race who strangely surround themselves in intrigue.

...It's a bit sweltering though.

◇

"What is your answer!"

The chief of Shiga Eight Swords--Zeff Julberg beat the blunt end of his expensive-looking spear and asked Liza once again.

"Master, would you allow me to accept the match?"

Liza is staring at Julberg-shi while looking giddy like she's before an extraordinary feast.
It's as if the fight will begin immediately if I shift my line of sight.

For the time being, you two, please do something about the thirst of blood that's on contrary to your seemingly fun stares.
The peanut gallery around us have forgotten to breathe you know.

"Liza, I think you know already but"
"Please do not worry. I won't be excessive against an old man. I will make sure to hold back."

I wanted to say that you couldn't fight, but if you say something like that, the other party probably won't let it go.
Instead of Julberg-shi, the peanut gallery around us are brimming with jeers, or rather, shrieks.

Liza was probably doing just as the elf masters have taught her, a powerful enemy wouldn't be able to show their true strength if they lost their temper, but I'd have preferred for her to provoke him after we had changed place.

Julberg-shi spins his spear and sets it in low stance.
Please stop gritting your back teeth to the point as if it'll break.

"Hohou, to worry about this old body of mine, you're quite the heroine with respect for their elders."
"It is the result of Master's virtue."

That's not actually a praise.

Apparently, Liza perceived Julberg-shi's words at face value.

"I'm sorry, but let's change the place."

I cut myself between the two since it'll be dangerous if they fight here.
Julberg-shi shoots me a gaze like he's going to kill me, but it's nothing compared to the demon lords'.

"The nobles might get hurt if you fight here, and we cannot allow the new kingdom airship to be broken."

With my words, Julberg-shi pulls back his spear and agrees to it with a sour look on face.

I couldn't stop the duel, but the Liza now should be fine even if she shows off her true strength.
I've gotten the personal connections from nobles, apart from the ones who demanded something unreasonable, anyway.
I'm a bit worried as to whether Liza and the others can deal with demons and demon lords, but that can be solved by me doing things as Nanashi.
As for the state of things, the only country that looks like they're going to war with Shiga Kingdom is the Weaselkin Empire on the eastern end, if they do, I'll just fire laser to draw a line before the army as Nanashi, that'll probably make them turn back. If they still insist on marching forward, I can just make a great wall with earth magic so they can't continue.

While my mind is being full of such assumptions, Julberg-shi instructs his retainer, the man who's carrying the white pike, to prepare for the duel on the garrison nearby the airport.
He's the holy knight that's also known as the [White Pike Knight] who challenged Liza and lost instead, a bit after our Mithril plate parade.
The peanut gallery told me later that he's one of the people aiming for one of the three vacant seats of Shiga Eight Swords.

The people around cheer as if they're waiting for Julberg-shi to go out of the airport.
We're also going toward the duel stage while receiving words of encouragement from our friends and the other Mithril explorers.

Since there was a big incident, like the attempted assassination of the Duke, I don't think this is the time to play around with a duel though...
When I look around, it seems the people who think of that are in minority.

◇

"Now, come."
"Acknowledged."

--Which era do you guys come from.
No one answers that inner thought of mine, and the showdown begins.

Brilliant red traces are crossing in the daytime arena.

The two of them are using Magic Edge from the start since Julberg-shi said, "Do not hold back."

I've instructed Pochi and Tama not to use Magic Edge in the middle of the city since they tend to do it unconcernedly, but now that I think about it, I didn't tell so to Liza.
Still, I think using Magic Edge in a non-lethal match is questionable.
The spears have been outfitted so it won't injure them though.

Of course, the proof that this match is non-lethal are the high priest of Garleon temple and the water court magicians sitting beside me in wait.
It seems they've made the water court magicians who were working in an engineering work in the suburb to stop their works and rush here.

The Knigth Order garrison's arena that's become the fight spot is 200-meter wide in radius, and there's a 2-meter firm wall surrounding it.
In addition, the members of Knight Order that can use magic are providing their magic power to the magic device that creates magic wall, so the peanut gallery are safe.

"As expected of the Shiga Eight Swords's top gentleman. His Magic Edge is more legit than Jeril's."
"Yeah, Liza-dono also coated her spear with Magic Edge as quick as Julberg-sama, but the light is clearly weaker."

I hear such conversations from the peanut gallery.

Liza has only put that much output since she coated the spear with Magic Edge with the intention of not hurting.
I wonder if they normally can't regulate the output?
I think the fuel consumption is bad if you thoughtlessly put out high power.

"Six consecutive strikes~?"
"Liza is amazing, but Oji-chan is also amazing nodesu."
"Eh, no way?! I could only see one strike just now though?"
"I saw two strikes."
"Arisa, Lulu, you can grasp the general movement if you look at the dust of cloud below, so I announce."

Just as Tama and Pochi have commented, the two have clashed with tremendous speed, exchanging blows in dizzying speed.
However, so this is the strength of Shiga Eight Swords huh.

I've mostly understood it with the Third Prince, but if this goes on, Liza will end the fight easily.
In any case, even though Liza's level is lower, Julberg-shi who's three level higher is being pushed.
Moreover, when I analyzed him with [Magic Perception] skill, Julberg-shi had already used physical reinforcement on himself. Has he gotten weak with age, or does Liza's basic

strength simply surpass him, I don't know which is the reason since there's too little comparison.

The peanut gallery are getting excited with the offense of defense between two spearsmen of different styles. It's quite a high-speed battle.
However, if this ebb and flow fight continues to go on, Liza will probably win with her endurance.

Julberg-shi was observing her in preparation for when she moved, but Liza made her move ahead of him.

"Ah!? Just now, Liza's spear has disappeared!"
"Eh? Disappear?"
"Liza's vanishing spear~?"
"It hasn't disappeared desuyo?"

Lady Karina raises her voice as she's tricked by Liza's feint.
It seems Arisa couldn't see it too since it's a trick that can only be seen by martial artists past certain standard.
Pochi has excellent kinetic vision so Arisa can't keep up to her in another meaning.

What Liza has done is a feint technique that she only uses against expert opponents.
You can't evade an attack if you see it normally, you do it by sensing the opponent's line of sight and the movement of muscles to avoid the attack, and Liza makes use of that to set the feint.
This technique was taught to us by the elf masters, I had also fallen for it the first time they did it.

The type of people who evade the moment they see the attack like Pochi and me can deal with it fine, but for people like Tama who evade attacks by reading ahead, it's easy for them to be caught by this technique.

Julberg-shi also gets taken by the feint, a single blow hits his torso.
This would have been over without that magic armor, a white magic board like a simplified version of Raka's Lady Karina protection protected him, it only ended with the scattering of white fragments.

It seems Liza also didn't think that she would win with the blow just now, she doesn't seem particularly discouraged.

"I see, you do seem different than my artificially grown comrades who only raise their level and magic edge."

Julberg-shi took some distances away from Liza, and said so.
It's hard to say that Liza was level 3 just a few months ago in this mood.

"It is the result of Master's guidance."

Liza tries to raise my stock with a serious face.
Nana, and even Lulu, please stop nodding to it. Look, Pochi and Tama even imitate you.

Liza seems to seriously think so, but I've only been doing the power-leveling, and the [Cherish your life] policy.
She's become strong with her own effort, and the intensive training of the elf masters.

"In honor of you who has trained that far at such age, I will bestow you with this technique. The legendary technique that has been kept even more closely guarded than the secret technique Magic Edge."

Julberg-shi sets his spear on his waist and collect his magic power on the spear's tip.
Is it different than Magic Edge Cannon?

It looks like Magic Edge Cannon judging from the way the magic power is collecting.
Liza also sets up her spear and concentrate on Julberg-shi's movement, trying to steal the technique.

"Oh, huge magic power is collecting on Sir Julberg's spear!"
"It's the technique that's only used against a powerful enemy!"

The peanut gallery become unrest when they see the spear's Magic Edge swelling.

However, the convergence is loose.
With that state, won't it end up in cone shape instead of bullet?
I feel that it'll only work as a distraction against enemies that have powerful magic guard.

Julberg-shi who has finally finished the preparation shoots the magic power while shouting, "Nuoo".
The bombardment of red magic power that's as big as man's body assaults Liza.

"Wa, don't stand still--"
"Liza-san!"

Arisa and Lulu scream in worry.
Liza's hands finally move when the bombardment shot by Julberg-shi has reached the middle point between the two.

She quickly shoots a small red Magic Edge Cannon that's been formed in an instant.

The cannonballs collide in front of Liza, red flash dyes the entire arena.
The magic wall protecting the arena seems to be resonating with it, the wall is also emitting red light, the inside of the arena can't be seen well.

I saw that the Magic Edge Cannon shot by Liza crushed Julberg-shi's Magic Edge Cannon, and then the leftover hit his body hard.
The white protection magic from the magic armor Julberg-shi is wearing has been annihilated.

--Wait, Liza?

A second Magic Edge Cannon comes flying toward Julberg-shi.
Its power has been reduced to the minimum, but Julberg-shi can't avoid it with his posture.

However, the fact that he's reigning the Shiga Eight Swords' top for a long time doesn't seem to be just a show, he smashes the Magic Edge Cannon with the fist that's not holding the spear while shouting, "Nunn", with fighting spirit.
Of course, the compensation for that is his fist. It has been completely destroyed.

The elder warrior's mental doesn't seem to be broken with just this much.
He pours magic power into the spear with his remaining dominant arm, preparing for the final attack.

Right at that time, the last Magic Edge Cannon that Liza had shot hits the wrist of the arm that's holding the spear.
After Arisa talked about how assault guns could shoot in tri-burst, the beastkin girls ended up using three shots of Magic Edge Cannon to bring down powerful enemies.
It's probably become a habit due to that.

Liza quickly approaches and sweeps Julberg-shi's legs with her tail, he falls down on his back without the mean to fix his posture, and then Liza thrusts her spear toward his throat, stopping before.

The red light on the arena's magic wall finally fades, revealing the ending to the peanut gallery.

"Hey, what's the meaning of this?"
"Why is Julberg-shi who shot the Magic Edge Cannon fallen?"

I can hear such perplexed words escaping from the peanut gallery who are in confusion.
However, that was only until the judge declared Liza's victory.

"The winner is『Black Spear』Liza!"

The moment right after that words were declared in the arena, shouts of joy loud enough to shake the Royal Capital reverberate.
I can't grasp what each of them is saying, but one thing is clear, that they are congratulatory words toward Liza.

Liza takes some distance away from Julberg-shi and swings her spear toward me.
It's really like Liza to not let her guard down even after the conclusion.

I also shout congratulation with all my might and wave back with my hand.
Rather than being worried about troublesome things in the aftermath, right now I just want to congratulate her victory.

On this day, Liza became the most famous explorer in the Royal Capital.

Part 7 - Challengers

Satou's here. When fighting games were popular, I liked playing with a player whom I knew I couldn't win against. I was able to learn various things even though I was badly beaten one-sidedly.

◇

The priest rushes over to Julberg-shi and heals his hand.
The effect of high heal magic is terrific, the broken hand is restored in an instant.

"Liza-dono, your strength is genuine."
"I am honored."

Julberg-shi who's been healed talks to Liza.
Liza replies while looking composed, but her tail is swinging around. The tail is honest.

"Shiga Eight Swords is the pike that shields the kingdom."

Julberg-shi suddenly begins narrating a story to Liza.

"For that reason, I think one's race or lineage have nothing to do with it as long as one has the strength and the heart that thinks heavily of one's kingdom."

Apparently he's inviting Liza to become a Shiga Eight Swords even though he hasn't directly said it to her.

"Right now there are three vacant seats on Shiga Eight Swords, among them, two have become the means for factional disputes among the nobles. However, the last seat is for me to nominate."

Would you not glare at me when you were saying the "factional dispute" part?

"I want to commend that seat to you. --Would you receive it?"

He said to Liza with serious face.
The girls around me look at Liza while looking tense. Only Nana who's in 'my pace' is playing with Shiro's and Crow's feather.

"I refuse."

Liza declined Julberg-shi's invitation with powerful voice.
Arisa and Pochi lose their strength after feeling relieved. That's fine and all, but stop rubbing your face on my leg during the confusion, Arisa. You too Mia, stop imitating Arisa.

"Why. You might be Sir Pendragon's slave right now, but the royal family will release you if you become a Shiga Eight Swords and even grant you with honorary earldom you know? It's a status and honor that cannot normally be gotten by a demi-human, why do you refuse"

Liza stops Julberg-shi who's talking while looking like he can't believe it.

"Certainly, I think it is a great honor for me."
"Then--"
"However, my loyalty lies not to the Kingdom, but to Master. I do not have the qualification to become a Shiga Eight Swords who must submit their loyalty to the Kingdom."

Those are some delicately dangerous lines.
Right then, Arisa the mood maker breaks in.

"That's right! We're the『Pendragon Seven Braves』! Together with Master, we'll show you that we'll become the new world guardian that rivals the『Shiga Eight Swords』!"

What the heck is [Pendragon Seven Braves]. Do you have any respect to Sanada Ten Braves?[w]

Arisa is just probably saying it to soften the atmosphere in this place, but looking at her proud-looking face, I'm scared that she's serious.

"Ooh! They've declared they're equal Shiga Eight Swords y'hear?"
"However, they did defeat Julberg-shi the『Unfalling』. They do have the qualification."
"Yeah, using light spear attack, it's the birth of new Shiga Kingdom guardians!"
"『Black Spear』, no, it's the『Magic-destroying Light Spear』Liza!"
"Glory to『Pendragon Seven Braves』and Shiga Kingdom!"

Somehow, the name that Arisa declared is spreading among the peanut gallery like it's official.
The flow of event is as such that I begin to suspect that someone has prepared some hired applauders, but the peanut gallery's mood is strange.
Is Liza defeating Julberg-shi something that significant?

Looks like Liza has gotten a new nickname since there were some people among them who could see her using the Magic Edge Cannon.

I don't think that Arisa's declaration has stopped Liza from entering Shiga Eight Swords, but it's succeeded to postpone it, it seems. I'll consult Nina-san for the rest.

By the way, I only knew the [Pendragon Seven Braves] thing that Arisa talked about was in fact, a name that came out in the novel Pochi had written, a long time after this.

◇

It's about time for us to meet with Baron Muno who's waiting in the royal castle, but the peanut gallery's clamor doesn't seem like it'll stop soon.
I was able to greet the acquaintances who had come to welcome us, but I'm troubled with the endless line of people who're congratulating Liza.

The ones who break that are two figures of people.

"You the one who won against the old man?"
"Ryouna-dono, don't forget your manner. We are people who sit on Shiga Eight Swords' seats."
"You're too stiff Bauen."

A wild-like woman carrying a large scythe on her shoulder called Ryouna, and a man wearing a single-edged sword came.
They're the Shiga Eight Swords' 8th rank, Ms. Ryouna the『Mower』and 6th rank,『Wind Blade』Bauen-shi.
Both are level mid-40s, they're considerably weaker compared to Julberg-shi.

Bauen-shi who's around forty years old is wearing a normal knight outfit, but the latter half twenties year old Ms. Ryouna wears some wild-like attires with knee-high trousers, and a coat that looks like a vest. By the way, despite the high exposure, she relatively doesn't feel sexy due to her ripe abs.
The reason why I don't refer Bauen-shi's sword as katana is because it's made with western-style workmanship. I could've called it saber, but since Bauen-shi lets out samurai-like atmosphere, I refer it as such.

Pochi and Tama are excited with the appearance of the new warriors.
They've begun playing Look-that-way game, probably to decide who goes first. Their action must have looked nonsensical by the people around us.

"Fight with me."
"I refuse. The we--"
"Ryouna-sama, I'm very sorry, but Liza is exhausted from her fight with Julberg-shi. Please ask again another time if you wish to challenge her."

I interrupted them since Liza was seemingly going to say "the weak".

"Who are ya?"
"I am Chevalier Pendragon, her master."
"--Pendragon?"
"Have you forgotten, Ryouna-dono. He's a candidate for our new colleagues."
"Ah.... Then, you fight me?"

I shake my head toward Ryouna who looks like a cat that's just found a rat.
Or rather, first time I've heard about this [new colleague candidate] thing.

"Please ask the people there if you want a fight."

I turn my hand toward the muscle-brains--Mithril explorers who have been glancing here.

"Everyone is a warrior that'd not fall behind Liza. It surely will be a fun fight."
"Right.... Okay, the lady-killer man over there! Looks like you're the strongest. Fight me!"
"I, Jeril, won't hold back even against women you know?"
"That's what a warrior is! Now, make some room! It's the beginning of a fun fight!"

It went well.
I'm interested with the fight between Mithril explorers and Shiga Eight Swords, but let's disperse from here immediately.
I pull Lady Karina who's glued herself on the front row together with our girls and go to the carriage.

Pochi who won the Look-that-way game is dejected but since it seems Baron Muno is going to hold a reception for us today, she's probably going to forget about it soon.

◇

"Is that an airship?"
"Yeah, that's the shipyard adjoining the airport."

Arisa is pointing to an airship factory.
They're building the hull parts that are going to be connected to the aerodynamic engines I've brought as Nanashi. The airship design is from me, but since it's not the type that has magic furnace powered by the Philosopher's Stone, it should be the traditional one that make use of the fuel rod made from magic-core-powder alchemy for the magic furnace.

Every country conceals the technology used in this type of magic furnace so I also don't know the way to make it.
I'm not really interested since its output is lower than the engines that use a Philosopher's Stone, and it seems to be theoretically impossible to be downsized.
I also already have the magic cylinders to power small airships aside with the Philosopher's stones, so I probably don't need it for now.
I've been given permission to access the forbidden library under the royal castle, and the royal academy's library, so I'll be checking them out when I have some free time.

Still, is it alright for the shipyard to be visible from outside?
I've heard that long ago nations went out of their way to hide the construction of warships, trains, or automobiles that run on national highway.

Leaving that worry of mine, the carriages keeps passing through the workshops area beside the shipyard to the noble street and then continue on the main street.

By the way, we're riding on four carriages since it wasn't enough with one.
The first one is for Lady Karina and the others, the second is for me, Arisa, and the beastkin girls, the third is for our luggage, and the last is for Lulu, Mia, Nana and the others. The division is decided fairly with rock-paper-scissor.

"Rattle-rattle~?"
"Pochi wants to rattle-rattle too nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi have found the people playing kickboards in the alley.
It's not popular in the labyrinth city since the city's roads have a lot of turns and twists, but I've let Pochi and the others test them on a straight passageway in the labyrinth once.
That kind of vehicle seemed to be first for them, everyone, including Liza and Lulu, were

having fun riding it.

"It's spreading nicely huh."

Arisa mutters earnestly when she sees it.
Kickboard is a product that Arisa has devised, it's being produced in Echigoya firm's workshop in the Royal Capital.
The product is selling so well Porina the manager almost overworks herself to death.
I'll make some time and show up in the workshop before long.

The street is crowded and lively as one would expect from the capital of the whole kingdom.
The main street is wide enough to hold four carriages, but since there's no traffic signal, it's seldom get crowded in the intersections. It's a good thing that there are few traffic compared to the modern area.

--Red points light up in the radar.

"Enemy's attack"
"Their direction?"
"Oh no! Nanodesu!"

Tama warns everyone about it almost at the same time as the radar.
Tama tells Liza who's asking the direction with her glance while taking out the stick shurikens. Pochi also took out the long toothpick from her bag in haste.

The 12 shadows reflected on the radar seem to be party of a criminal guild [Gibbon].
A man on the later half of 20s who can use water and fire magic seems to be the leader. This guy is on the rooftop of a nearby three-story building.

The thieves attack when I have checked that much. We're in the middle of a junction.
Four covered wagons that move like they're going to crash surround the back carriage that has our luggage in front and back.
Some men come down from the covered wagons and throw several flare-like things to the ground, blocking the view. It's probably the same thing as the smoke ball often used in the labyrinth.

"Pochi and I will defeat the suspicious people. Tama you protect the carriage."
"Aye, nanodesu!"
"Roger~?"

Liza and Pochi assault into the white smoke, defeating the assailants. Tama who's climbed to the carriage's roof also throws a stick shuriken toward the the leader who's chanting a spell to support the thieves from the rooftop.
I use Magic Hand to pull the foot of the leader who's lost his balance from Tama's stick shuriken, dropping him to the ground. It seems the carriage on the back is being taken care of by Nana.

They're probably aiming for the third carriage.
It's normally the one where the expensive equipment of explorers are stored after all. In our case, it's no big deal even if they get stolen since it only houses dummy equipment, but if it becomes known among the criminal groups that stealing things from us is easy, touring the capital would be difficult, so we're handling this seriously.

It seems our reaction speed was beyond their expectation, they're working to steal the luggage carriage slower than I expected.
The criminal guild people board the luggage carriage, drag the coachman down, and try to quickly get away.

"I won't let you run!"

Liza shoots a short spear between the wheel of the carriage, overturning it.

I, who's running beside it while catching the coachman of the thief, have almost got rolled up in it too.
I also lightly push a man, who had almost been ran over by the toppled carriage, with my foot to make him fall down to the ground, and then embrace some girls wearing servant-like attires who were going to be hit too, on both arms, bringing them to the safe place.

I put the girls to the ground and trample the back of the thief who's trying to run away from me, arresting the thief.
I've been treating this thief roughly, but it seem it's a woman.
Well, I guess it's fine. She's a thief.

"Master, there~"

Tama who was in charge of guarding the carriage rushes over to me and points to a nearby roof.
Over there is a suspicious woman in black clothing. Unlike the thief I'm trampling, her breasts are big so I'm aware that she's woman even from a distance.

The woman who notices that she's been sensed suddenly turns around.

"Ran away~?"

I catch the nape of Tama who was going to use Flickering Movement to chase the woman, stopping her.
I hold Tama, who turns around with a wondering face, on my arm and pat her head.

The woman earlier doesn't seem to be in the same gang as these thieves, but since she's suspicious, I've put a map marker on her just in case.
It seems she's wearing equipment that inhibit recognition, so her information is displayed twice. She's probably aiming for treasures since her title is [Phantom Thief].
Phantom Thief-san has some unusual skills like [Disguise], so I leave the marker on her alone.

"What is this uproar!"

Someone forces his way through with arrogant voice.
It's a man riding a horse. He's not wearing an armor but judging from the painted crest, he seems to be a part of Royal Capital's guard.

"We were attacked by thieves. I'm Chevalier Pendragon. I was taking my master's daughter to the royal castle."

I make a gesture, and his line of sight shifts to Lady Karina who's showing her face to look outside.
Lady Karina is making a disappointed face since she didn't get to join the fray, but it probably looks like she's worried from the point of view of someone who doesn't know the circumstance.
The man's face is reddened and he's going toward Lady Karina, but I make him call his troop in order to take the thieves to the jail.

Repairing the carriage seems like it'll take some time, so I negotiate with a shop nearby to rent their carriage.

After a while, the foot soldiers that the cavalryman has brought take the thieves away.
According to the foot soldiers, an attack this showy is very rare even in the Royal Capital.

There are probably some people who heard about Mithril explorers coming here with an airship, and came up with a plan to steal their expensive magic tools.
The treasures gotten from the Floormasters have been delivered to the castle by officials who have Item Box skill and work directly under the royal family, so it's fine. The chant orb's marker is in the underground treasure room of the castle, so there's no mistake about it.

The thieves targeting us at the labyrinth city were increasing, so I'm going to assume that they will also come in droves during our stay in the Royal Capital's mansion.

After tearing off the cavalryman who persistently whispers words of love toward Lady Karina's carriage, our carriages continue to the royal castle.
It seems Baron Muno doesn't have any mansion in the Royal Capital, so they're borrowing a guest house of the royal castle.

Passing through the gatekeepers who are wearing dazzling full body armors (Plate Mail) and holding Halberds, we've finally arrived at the royal castle.

Part 8 - Under the Sakura Tree

Satou's here. There's the saying, "A corpse is buried underneath the Sakura tree", but I don't know whether it's from a novel or a fable, let alone the source's title.

◇

"It looks grand seen from below isn't it."
"It sure is. It's eerily beautiful."

I muttered while looking up at the Sakura tree.
Someone's pulling my sleeve. It's Mia.
The beastkin girls have moved to the borrowed luggage carriage as its guards, so Mia and Lulu have moved to the vacant seats of this carriage.

"Once again."
"--the『eerily beautiful』part?"
"Yes."

Mie ecstatically closes her eyes and pushes her mouth. When I shift my line of sight to the opposite side, Arisa is also taking the same pose.

Astonished, I seek help to Lulu who's sitting in front of me, but she quietly closes her eyes after blushing sakura-color for an instant.
--You girls, did you conspire for this beforehand?

The carriages arrives at the place Baron Muno is staying unaffected with the trifle inside.

We're missing one carriage.
Apparently, the luggage carriage that the beastkin rode had entered through the back entrance.

"Welcome to the Royal Capital."

Guided by the way that's formed from the maids who are standing in rows, we enter the mansion.

It seems these maids aren't Baron Muno's servants, but this mansion's.
As the proof, these maids aren't wearing the maid uniforms, but elegant one-piece-type uniforms.

Pina who's in maid uniform is waiting in the entrance hall.

"We have been waiting for you. Chevalier-sama, Karina-sama."
"It's been a long time. I'm glad to see you're healthy."
"News about Chevalier-sama's activities had also reached Muno territory."

We would obstruct the maids' job if we chat too long, so I cut it off appropriately.

Unlike the battle maids I've seen in Muno territory and the Duchy Capital, Pina is acting gracefully like it's natural, "I've been a maid for a long time", while guiding me to the living room.

Checking on the map, Baron Muno and Consul Nina seem to be in the northern conference room of the royal castle. It seems to be quite an exhausting conference, the Baron's stamina has been greatly diminished.
This is the first time I saw the abnormal status, [Overworked].

"Baron-sama and Consul-sama are currently out for a prior engagement, so please relax in this room until they get back."

The maids are putting several tea sets and tea-cakes on the table. The tea cakes are of still-warm baked sweets and white-candy like things put on small bowls.
The bell on top of the table is probably for calling the maids. I let the maids who are waiting near the room entrance to fall back.

After a bit, the beastkin girls who have entered from the mansion's back entrance meet up with us.

"Mumwu~? Illegal occupation~?"
"First come, first served."

Tama is aiming to recapture the lap that Mia has taken.
Today, the positions of these two are reversed. But, I don't think it's something that need to be competed so much. Pochi tries to climb and sits beside me, she doesn't seem to be interested with my lap.
When my eyes meet with Pochi's who's sitting beside me, she smiles, "He".
That was too cute I involuntarily patted her head.

Now then, I want to talk about our policy from now on, but since Lady Karina is naturally in the room, it's hard to do it.
I guess I'll talk about it once we get to my own mansion I've prepared in the royal capital.

I had prepared a mansion for Chevalier Pendragon use while acting as someone called Akindou when I was delivering the airships and the magic swords here. I've announced that Akindou is the purveyor of Pendragon's house beforehand so it's quite convenient. Echigoya is for big things like airships when I act as Nanashi or Kuro, so I'm making use of Akindou for Satou's businesses.

"Still, even though I had thought that you were strong, I would've never guessed that you would even win against Julberg-shi of Shiga Eight Swords."
『It was truly splendid.』
"I'm honored."

Lady Karina and Raka are praising Liza.

Pochi and Tama look happy like they're talking about them.

Mia who's won my lap from Tama is humming in good mood, unrelated to it.
I don't think that place is that comfortable though....

"But you know, although we've dodged it with the Pendragon Seven Braves thing, won't Liza-san or Master get to become Shiga Eight Swords like this?"

While drinking the cup beside me, Arisa asked anxiously.
Oh good. That [Pendragon Seven Braves] thing wasn't serious. I was sure that she was when I looked at that proud-looking face.

"Pendragon Seven Braves nanodesu!"
"Seven braves~? Karina is included too~?"

Pochi and Tama said so without minding, are they not embarrassed with that name?
Lady Karina tilts her head after hearing Arisa.

"Liza will surely be, but they won't recommend Sa, Satou right? If it's swordsmanship, aren't Pochi and Tama stronger?"
"That's not true at all nodesu!"
"Master is stronger~"

Pochi and Tama deny that while shaking their heads.
"But", and so Lady Karina looks unconvinced.

She's been thoroughly beaten by Pochi and Tama in the Labyrinth City's mansion.
From Lady Karina's perspective, I probably am not comparable to the two.

"....I-is that so."

I wonder what?
My crisis perception kicks in when I see Lady Karina who has seemingly consented about something while looking down.

I can't see her face, but the corner of her lips feels like Arisa's when she's laughing "Guheguhe". Although there's some difference with hers looking slightly more refined.

"Satou! I understand well what you feel!"

She declares so while looking at me happily.
That must be a misunderstanding.

I couldn't said that since her whole face is smiling gleefully.

"H-hey. Isn't Oppai-san misunderstanding something?"
"Nn."
"That seems to be so."

Arisa whispers to my ear.
Looks like Mia and Lulu think the same.
I asked Nana who was feeding Shiro and Crow, and she gave her opinion, "Rather than misunderstanding, it's mis-recognition from maidenly revision, so I conjecture."

There's a high possibility that Lady Karina misunderstands that I will, "lose on purpose", in the fight to hide my true strength.
It looks like it'd become troublesome if I don't quickly dispel the misunderstanding.

◇

"This is the kingdom-style sakura salmon meuniere."

A person wearing butler-like clothes says so after putting some refined-looking salmon meuniere dish on the plates before us.
This salmon has pink scales like sea bream so people call it [Sakura Salmon].
It seems to be often eaten during the sakura blooming season as a good luck charm in the Royal Capital.

"Pochi-chan, don't start by stabbing it with the fork. Use the knife properly."
"I can eat this much in one bite nodesuyo?"
"It's awright even without a knife~?"
"It's not alright!"

Teaching Pochi and Tama manner seem difficult for Lulu and Arisa.

"Shiro, you hold it like this."
"Like this? Crow?"
"That's right."

Shiro is being taught the table manner by Crow, they master it without great difficulty.
The corners of Nana's eyes are coming loose as she sees the two. They look like a mother and her daughters, but age-wise, Nana is actually the younger one.

While giving a sidelong glance at them, I talk to Mia who's looking at the meuniere with a grim face.

"You too try eating it Mia."
"I hate fish."
"The bones are few, eat it while thinking you're being deceived."
"Mumwu."

Mia scowls at the meuniere.
Groaning while holding the fork on your mouth is a breach of manner, but it's hard to point that out since it looks cute.

"Mia, fork."
"Nn."

After appreciating it for a bit, I pointed it out to Mia.

◇

The Baron and the others haven't come back even after we've eaten the dinner and taken a bath.
The Baron's parameters shown on the map are looking dangerous. His stamina has become zero and alternating between fainted and awakened.

I want to give him nutrient and stamina recovery magic potions. Unfortunately, I can't readily show up there since only upper nobles and their associates are allowed to attend the conference.
I hand over some healing potions to Pina. I want her to give it during the conference's break.

At that time I conveyed to her that we would like to leave today, but she tearfully entreated me, saying that Consul Nina had instructed her to absolutely keep us here.
It couldn't be helped, so I was going to take everyone in a night tour of the sakura trees, but it was stopped too.
Because they don't have the mean to contact us.

"Satou."
"What is it Mia."
"Called."

I went to the balcony to enjoy the night sakura tree there instead, but Mia who was already there said so to me.
Mia is looking at the huge sakura tree.

"Do you want to go to the base of the huge sakura tree?"
"Nn."

Mia is looking unusually serious.

"Arisa, sorry but could you contact me with Telephone when the Baron has returned."
"Okkey. I'll join Mia's sleeping together session once."
"....Okay."

I put a Carved Seal Board for [Return] magic in one corner of the room.
Sleep-sharing huh, Arisa is unselfish. Sexual harassments are forbidden of course.

Leaving Pochi and the others who look like they want to tag along, I go with Mia toward the base of the Sakura tree.

Part 9 - Under the Sakura Tree (2)

Satou's here. Similar with the tale about snow woman, they say Dryads charm men into tree's trunk while letting them see happy dreams.

It might have been dangerous if the Dryad I saw back then wasn't a little girl.

◇

I'm moving to base of the giant sakura tree while princess-carrying Mia and hiding using Spy skill with Ground Shrink skill.

We arrive under the sakura tree without anyone noticing.
There were some fences and barrier that protected the sakura tree in the middle of the way, but it couldn't become a hindrance.

There's a girl with ephemeral body sitting on the base of the sakura tree.
She has pink blonde hair.

This girl must be the sakura spirit who called Mia.
I carelessly showed myself up in front of that girl without even checking the AR reading.

"Who are you?! You dare to approach the『Holy Sakura Tree』without permission from『Sakura Protector』!"

The girl completely changed from her ephemeral appearance that almost looked she was melting into the darkness and asked our identities with the force of raging fire.

Let's reply with some theatrical gesture.

"Pardon us, we have come as called by the sakura tree."
"What suspicious things are--"

A beautiful woman who appeared from the tree's trunk stopped the girl who was going to deny my word.
Geh, the sakura tree spirit really shows up....

"I'm sorry『Sakura Protector』-chan. Sleep for a while okay."

The woman who suddenly appeared from the trunk touches the girl, making her sleep in an instant.
The sakura spirit catches the listless falling girl and gently lies her down on the root of the sakura tree.

And then, after gently tidying the girl's hair, she lifts her head and faces us.
I feel like I've seen that face--

"Ara! Isn't it the bo~y. You've even come to visit the sakura me!"

As if affirming that, the AR reading even says [Dryad].
Although, this one is a sensually attractive beautiful woman that's unlike the little girl dryad I know.
The Dryad beauty tried to stretch her arms in order to embrace me, but Mia stopped it.

"Mwu, shameless."
"Ara? Boruenan Baby-chan was here too? To think you're being jealous, you're a woman after all despite being a baby."

Apparently, Mia wanted to meet this Dryad beauty.
The conversation continues while Mia is taking a posture that prevents Dryad getting closer to me. Dryad's given many reasons to persuade Mia, but her business is always the same.

"Satou."
"Boy, sorry for always asking you this. Can you give me magic power?"

--as I thought.
She puts Ban the vampire to shame.

But well, with such voluptuous beauty as the partner, one or two kisses are no trouble at all.

Dryad hugs my head and then kisses me.
It seems Mia is also clear that this is magic supplying, she's not saying [Guilty]. She seems dissatisfied though, her cheeks are inflated like balloons that are going to burst.

After sucking the largest amount of magic power she's done so far, around 2000 points, Dryad parts her lips from mine with a lewd sound.
Mia pulls Dryad away from me as soon as the magic supplying is over.

"Un, satisfying~. Ya~, I'm saved. The flow of mana in the royal capital has been strange for awhile now. I was really troubled since I couldn't absorb mana from the Royal Capital's Source. Baby-chan and Boy really saved me."
"Nn."

I inquired her since I heard some questionable words, but I couldn't obtain any other information besides the fact that the flow of mana became amiss only recently. 'Recently' is also seen from Dryad's out-of-order sensation of time, so just when was it is also questionable.

"Boy, this is a thank for the magic power. Ask Aialize-sama for the way to use it. She must know how."

After giving me a sakura-colored orb, Dryad disappears into the sakura's trunk.
According to AR appraisal, it's called Sakura Drop. It seems to be a crystallized power of spirits. I've been getting a lot of rare materials recently.

◇

I was going to leave the place after seeing off Dryad who disappeared into the sakura's trunk, but the [Sakura Protector] girl would probably catch a cold if we leave her alone like this, so I decided to wake her up.
Another reason is because leaving off just like that would make us be treated like a suspicious people. She saw our faces after all.

Oh right, as for the information about the Royal Capital's Earth's Vein getting strange, I'll go inform the king or the prime minster about it before long.

After using [Break Magic] on the girl and calling her, her eyes are opening.

"You'll catch a cold if you sleep at a place like this you know?"
"....Nn, the sakura spirit."

Did she see Sakura Dryad just before she went asleep?
It's still within my expectation. Let's play fools.

"The figure of you taking a nap on the sakura's root is as beautiful as the sakura spirit."
"....No way, someone like me--"

Even while sleeping, she wriggles from my praise and then she notices the situation halfway through and gets up.
She doesn't seem to have low blood pressure.

"--Who are you! This place is the prohibited『Holy Sakura Tree』enclosure!"
"We stumbled here when we lost our way during a sakura night watching. I am sorry to bother you, but would yo please tell me the way to the state guesthouse?"

The girl become nervous in different direction from my word.
She probably knows that state guests in this season are all either lords or ambassadors of foreign nations.

"Would you be so kind as to tell me your name? I am called Athena the『Sakura Protector』, one of the Shiga 33 Wands."

The girl introduces herself while showing the crest drawn on her robe.
The girl has the name taken from Greek myth, but there is nothing about her that indicates she's a reincarnated or a teleported person. The name is probably a coincidence.
Shiga 33 Wands should be the title of the royal court magicians.

"I am a retainer of Baron Muno, my name is Chevalier Pendragon."
"Mia."

Ms. Athena breaks off her courteous attitude once she hears our introductions.

"The heck, I thought you were some stupid son of upper noble, what a waste of effort."

Her polite speech has suddenly changed to be rough.
I thought she was a commoner, but it turns out she's a viscount's daughter. Daughters of upper nobles should have been more trained to keep their manner though....
She's become a royal court magician at her age after all, I guess she was studying magic too much?

"Normally, I'd have to bring people who broke the ban to the garrison but since it's annoying just go away--"

Ms. Athena who's speaking down on us stops halfway.
She's looking at Mia.

Mia who doesn't understand the reason why she's being stared tilts her head.

"Y-you're an elf right! Which clan are you?"
"Rude."

Mia sulks from the rude way she's questioning her.
It can't be helped, I tell her [Boruenan Clan] in Mia's place.

"Bo-Boruenan Clan, don't tell me, the Boruenan Clan where the Elf Sage Trazayuya from?"
"Nn."

Mia answered briefly to Ms. Athena who was asking with trembling voice.

"I knew it! Don't think you're great just because you're elf like the great Sage! My ancestor might lost, but I will absolutely leave behind achievements that surpass the Sage!"

The girl points her finger to Mia with a snap while declaring so. However, Mia looks perplexed since she can't follow the sudden story.
Apparently, her ancestor seemed to have some sort of discord with Trazayuya-shi.

"I hate elves who are acting arrogant just because of their birth. I won the status of royal court magician with my unrelenting effort and talent. I'm currently a Red Belt in Shiga 33 Wands. But I'll show you that I'll become the elite Silver Belt who leads the royal court magician!"
"Mwu?"

Ms. Athena keeps talking to Mia without catching a breath.
Mia seems slightly panicked from too many unknown words.

Still, there's Shiga Eight Swords and then this, the people of this kingdom really like to attach number on titles.
It's probably why there's the Four Devas too.

"Not."
"What is!"

Ms. Athena reflexively retorted to Mia, but then Mia shows her the Mithril Plate from her chest.
Mia is probably trying to say that she's acquired it with her own effort.

"T-that's a Mithril Plate! Come to think of it, they said the Mithril Plates this time defeated the upper and middle layer floormasters.... No, then I'll defeat the floormaster"
"Impossible."
"Why! I will absolutely defeat it!"
"It's impossible because it's impossible."
"We humans have progressed when you elves are shutting themselves in the forest! Come to the practice area of the royal court magician next time. We'll show you the real worth of us humans. Don't complain to me if you become weak at the knees after watching Synchronous Magic!"
"Mwu."

Mia was trying to say that magician alone won't be able to defeat the floormaster, but her words were too short, it couldn't get transmitted.
I don't want to intervene a quarrel between kids, but I guess I can at least be the interpreter.

"Calm down. Mia isn't looking down on you, she's saying that magicians alone can't defeat the floormaster."
"Is that so?"
"Nn."

Ms. Athena was dumbfounded from my explanation, and then Mia confirmed it.
It seems she's embarrassed for getting too excited, she's stumbling her next words while her white cheeks are turning sakura-colored.

"U-umm. For now, I apologize for my gaffe. I'm sorry. But, it's true that humans are amazing! Come see us once. You have to!"
"Nn."

After apologizing, Ms. Athena talked rapidly like she was fudging her embarrassment and then she ran away from the base of the sakura tree.
Oy, is it alright for you to leave the people who intruded on the prohibited place alone?

Even though the girl is only around a middle or high school student age, I think leaving her duty is not a good thing. It's convenient for us this time though.

We got to meet a strange girl, but let's consider it lucky since we got a connection with the royal court magician.
I'm interested with that Synchronous Magic thing too, I'll visit them with Mia when we get some free time.

Still, with a tree this big, cleaning the sakura petals seems like a pain.
Taking Mia whose head and shoulders have been piled with sakura petals like snow, I returned to the mansion with Teleport magic.

◇

The baron and the others didn't come back even when it became midnight.

I carry the children who look sleepy and lie them on the bed.
I've told Lulu to sleep early since she's going to the Duchy Capital with an airship tomorrow morning to enter the cooking contest. Liza and Nana are the guards, Arisa is the cheerleader, that's the plan.

Pochi, Tama, and Mia are staying in the Royal Capital with me.
It seems Mia has stayed in order to keep me from doing affairs, what a scandalous thing to say. Pochi and Tama seem to be the guards for Mia and me.
The two who were at a loss choosing between going to the cooking contest feast or being nearby me looked very cute.
Of course I'm planning to stealthily go with the three to cheer Lulu during the final.

Lady Karina has retreated to her room, seemingly tired with the leveling that she was doing every day.
However, the thing she said, "Don't lose your way okay", with disappearing voice as she went, I wonder if that was an invitation for yobai? If she's inviting me, I'd have liked if she whispered it sexily. I won't get on it though.

I drink some Shiga liquor while admiring the night sakura trees that have been lighted up with magic beyond the window.
Arisa begged, "One cup!", but I rejected it. In place of liquor, I pour handmade ginger ale to a glass for Arisa.

I talk a bit about our future plan while drinking and exchanging Shiga liquor with Liza.
About peerage, about getting ahead in life, and about releasing her from slavery. She's begun talking about her honest thought with the help of alcohol that she couldn't do when she was sober.

"My spear exists for Master's sake. If it's allowed, until the end of this life, my loyalty and soul to be beside Master--"

Liza who can't hold her liquor stops talking after that, and goes to sleep while still holding the cup without hearing my answer.
Good night Liza. Please take care of me from now on.

Of course, you too Arisa.

Part 10 - Complicating Negotiation

Satou's here. There are times when you're hit with an idea during unexpected time right. There's also the time when I thought of an algorithm that I couldn't think no matter how much before right when I entered a maid cafe and then I immediately dashed back to the office.

◇

I play with the hair of Arisa who's sleeping on my lap while sipping the Shiga liquor.
I'm hit with an idea for original magic circuit when I see the dancing sakura petals. In case of writing something that needs to be rewritten many times, doing it on the memo pad in the Menu's exchange column is nice.
It was quite a challenging circuit to make, but I've made it somehow. Let's try it with Arisa's and Mia's help tomorrow.

That was when the Baron and Nina-san returned.
I see from the window that the Baron is being carried on a male servant's back. His face looks very pale.

I drop Arisa who's pretending to be sleeping from my lap and go to the entrance hall to give a magic potion to the Baron.
Of course Arisa who's completely opened her eyes after giving up her pretend-sleep follows me along unashamedly.

"Welcome back Nina-san. Pina, give this nutritional supplement to Baron-sama."
"Ou, I'm back. Damn it, you're letting off the smell of nice liquor on you. Give me some too."

Nina-san curses at the smell of alcohol in my breath.
The Baron who's already gasping is getting retired to his bedroom.
I tell them again to make sure that he drinks the supplement before he sleeps. He should be fit again next morning if he does.

"Oh Nina-san is sulking."
"Yeah, though if Arisa-dono assumes the consul-aide position, my workload will decrease by half."
"No~way. I won't be near Master if I do that."

Looks like Consul Nina is also fatigued, there's no strength on her quip to Arisa.
I take out a nutritional supplement from the storage through my pocket and hand it over to Nina-san. It's the special version with a lot of sugar added I've prepared for these two people.

"What's this? It smells really sweet."
"Please drink it in one gulp. It's good for fatigue."

Nina-san gulped the supplement in one go and muttered, "sweet", while looking like she

really didn't like it.
Nina-san has recovered her vitality once we reach the living room. As expected of magic medicines.

"It sure is very effective."
"It's a product of an up-and-coming alchemist called Trismegistus."
"Feel like I've heard that name somewhere."

I pour some Shiga liquor that Arisa has fetched to Nina-san who answered haphazardly.
The side dish is some smoked lesser basilisk.

◇

"--That's why, do your things moderately."
"Please don't say something unreasonable."

Nina-san explains the situation mixed with complaints.

I'm told that Nina-san has made the arrangement to make me become a baronet.
There should be no problem with it considering my achievements so far, but a roadblock came from an unexpected direction. It was from the relatives of Duke Oyugock who should have been in the same faction as us.

"Geez, I seriously thought that the Duke had gone senile when he wanted to raise you to become an earl."
"....Earldom is surely absurd indeed."

Earldom is an upper noble rank, there are only 32 of them even in Shiga Kingdom. Of course, dissenting opinions came one after another from other factions, and that proposal was rejected.

--Normally it should have been over with that.

Apparently countless stars flowed in the western sky, and the tremor reached even the Royal Capital.
Looks like Nina-san and the Baron saw it too from the royal castle.

Furthermore, a report came from the temple about the appearance of an oracle informing the revival of the Dog-head Evil God in the western desert.
It seems the royal castle was in panic, things were horrible. Oracle has its good and bad too.
The break-down of the nobles from old lineage was particularly hilarious, so Nina-san laughed while drinking her liquor.

A lot of lives were sacrificed due to the riot and chaos from the panic until a communication from the labyrinth city conveyed that the demon lord--the Dog-head Evil God according to the temple--had been subjugated.
Sacrifices might not have appeared if I didn't use a flashy magic like Meteor Shower, but there's nothing I can do even if I worry about the what-if. Let's make this be a lesson for

next time.
Specifically, I need to get the Chant Orb, and become able to use Advanced and Forbidden magic. I must be able to defeat powerful enemies without depending on the Meteor Shower.

Now then, let's get back to the topic.

The King announced that Hero Nanashi was the [Hero of Shiga Kingdom] in order to calm the populace, but the effect was weak.
It's natural since the hero never even did anything in front of the Royal Capital's populace.
It seems the populace even doubted the existence of this Hero Nanashi.

Then, a report about a group led by me as the Raid Leader that defeated the floormaster came to the Royal Capital that was in turbulent state.
Normally the story should have been a rehash of Jeril and the others' and be overshadowed, but due to such circumstance, it pointlessly attracted considerable attention.

The difference in power between a demon lord and a floormaster is completely unthinkable, but from the point of view of normal people, they're both mighty monsters.
And so, since an existence that could oppose such being appeared to be more reliable than a hero that may or may not exist, some strange request, claiming that I should be taken from the Baron and became the direct retainer of the royal family, began to spread among the Royal Capital's nobles.

It's nothing but grasping at straws, but it's really quite an annoying story.
Although in a way, I've had it coming....

And the decisive blow was when Liza won against a Shiga Eight Sword.
Looks like I was on the verge of being stupidly nominated to become an earl, but Nina-san and Baron Muno's fine-play successfully stopped it.

I can't say anything else but GJ (Good Job).
In the end, Nina-san said that I was to be either a honorary viscount or a permanent baron.

"By the way, is it true that the group you led to defeat the『Floormaster』was mainly consisted of fairykin mercenaries?"
"Yes, they were people whom I was introduced by an acquaintance during our way to the Labyrinth City."

I'm not telling any lie, most of them are introduced by Aze-san.

"Moreover, none of your retainers fell, that's quite an absurd achievement."
"It's better when there are few victims right."

In fact, there was zero victim and none suffered any great injury, it was a completely safe hunt.

"In addition, you even established a charity and an explorer training school in the Labryinth

City was it?"
"Yes, it's just as I've written in the letter. We should make good use of human resources."

It sounds a bit cold, but if you want to effectively collect resources such as magic cores and materials from the labyrinth, it's better to raise the standard of beginner explorers so there will be more experienced ones.
If there are more people with room to move, there will be people who would raise the next generation.

"Frankly speaking, you're already not at the level of a honorary chevalier."
"You're overestimating me."

It's not humility, I really think so.
The charity and the training school were not because I had some noble ideal or something, it was just a course of events.

◇

"By the way, I've been meaning to ask you this since a little while ago...."
"What is it? Still, this fish sure is delicious. It's fleshy like eels and delicately tasty like Congers."

--Ah, that's the White Horn Snake.
I've added them because the smoked basilisk was gone, but since I carelessly took out meat from monsters, I dodge the question by saying, "Please guess it."
This kabayaki goes well with Shiga liquor.

Incidentally, Shiga Kingdom's Congers are as thick as a baseball bat.

Oops, the story wandered off again.
I forcibly steer the story back to the topic.

"I seem to recall that peerages higher than honorary baronet and permanent baronet can only be conferred by the King himself?"
"Of course it is."
"Then why were the nobles discussing as to whether someone be conferred peerage."

Before answering me, Nina-san waved the emptied liquor bottle demanding more, so I take out the Dragon Spring Liquor from behind the sofa. I choose the best liquor as the compensation for all the trouble.

"What we're doing is the prior negotiation for recommending people with achievements who deserve the peerage to the king. How many thousands nobles do you think are in this large kingdom? Recommending talented people from places that don't reach the King's eyes is the privilege and duty of the upper nobles."

I see, it's like a corporation huh.
It's like section managers or heads recommending their subordinates for promotion to the

board of directors, just at nation-wide scale.

"Although, it's only about a half of the recommended people get to be conferred peerages. This time there are many people who are instated at low ranks like you."

I see, so she recommends [honorary viscount or permanent baron] because [honorary baron or permanent baronet] peerages are many.

"I'd like the honorary baronet one please. It looks like the marriage proposals would increase if I chose permanent one."
"Hmph, if you don't like marriage proposals, then just get a wife already. Nana-dono's age is close to yours right. I personally want you to take Karina-sama who's late for marriage for your bride though."

'That way there would be less nobles who scheme on transferring', so Nina-san muttered.

◇

Afterwards, she tells me the recent states of Muno Territory.

I've heard it from the letter too, it seems the reconstruction of Muno Barondom is doing well enough to be called too well.
It's thanks to the nobles from Duchy Capital who offered their technical support--in the name of Support and Technical Exchange.
She's scouted lady attendants and their attendants who come from Duchy Capital to learn manners to become personnel for internal administration, so they've secured enough for now.

Furthermore, as for the public order, on top of the improvement thanks to a mysterious person--it's probably me when I was searching the pickles--capturing large number of thieves, the bronze explorers coming from the labyrinth city and entering into government service also helped reinforcing the army.
Looks like Sir Zotor diligently trains with the former-explorer newcomers too. The ex-fake hero Hauto-kun has also become qualified enough to be an officer.

After the talk has mostly ended, we begin to talk about gossip.
Nina-san, tomorrow will be bad if you don't sleep soon you know?

"Oh right, the daughter of Viscount Emurin is also coming here. She's visiting her home at the Duchy Capital right now, but she should be coming here with the Viscount with an airship."

Who was it again--right, if I remember right, Viscount Emurin is the noble-san who runs [Lulu's fruit] orchard. I've met Rina-chan the daughter in several tea parties. She was a reliable child even though she's only around the age of a first year in middle school.

Oops, rather than that, I forgot to ask the most important thing.

"I have something important to talk with you--"
"What's with the serious face."

I question Nina-san who's pulled back, I'm finally able to ask about dried gourds.
Specifically, about the bottle gourd fruits that will become dried gourds.

"You have interest in some strange things. That thing is not flavorful, and the rind is tough, so no one eats it unless as substitute food."
"That's because you can't eat that as is. It's rich in dietary fiber, so it's good for stomach."
"Fu~hn, it's a kind of medical plant huh."

Nina-san folds her arms, maybe she's thinking that I'm going to commercialize them.

Nina-san found out about the bottle gourds when she was investigating it as to whether it could bear fruits that could be sold in order to finance Muno Barondom reconstruction.
Surprisingly, the plants aren't only in the great forest like True Ancestor Ban has said, they're growing wild everywhere in the northern part of Muno Barondom.
It seems there were even villages that went by with dried gourds when the demon was secretly acting behind the scene, and they suffered in poverty.

Nina-san who's guessed that I want the bottle gourd fruits makes a firm promise that she will send them to my mansion in the Labyrinth City.
If I'm able to make a good recipe out of it I'm going to send it to Gelt-san, the chief of Muno castle.

The drinking bout is over when the large bottle of the Dragon Spring Liquor has been emptied.
I carry Arisa who's asleep and made my arm to be her pillow to the bedroom.

There are only three hours left before morning, but I'll let her sleep even for a bit.

Part 11 - Royal Capital's Mansion

Satou's here. There was a time when I felt disappointed with the rain during sports day after practicing for many days.

Of course, I was disappointed about the wasted practices. It was not because I couldn't see the girls in their sportswear. Yes, not at all.

◇

"Then the cooking contest is postponed?"
"Yes, I'm really sorry. There's some complicated circumstance...."

When we were greeting Marquis Lloyd's butler whom we found in the airship boarding terminal, he told Lulu about the postponement of the cooking contest.

He's being evasive about the situation, but it's probably because Marquis Lloyd has been recalled to the Royal Capital for suspicion of attacking Duke Bishtal's airship.
The luxurious carriage that passed by us when we were coming here must be of Marquis Lloyd's.

I've also confirmed on the map that Marquis Lloyd is in the royal castle.
I'll visit him with some presents later. Meeting with someone who's under suspicion for attempted murder of the duke might be bad, but we, who are the ones who stopped the attempted murder, should be fine.

After saying farewell to the butler, we leave the bustling airship terminal.

◇

"Hey hey, are those uniforms?"
"Hm? Looks like it, probably the Royal Academy's uniform."

Arisa asked about the boys and girls who are walking down the road, wearing the same clothes. Even on the AR indicators, they're, [Affiliation: Shiga Royal Academy, Preschool].
Arisa could have probably checked it herself with [Status Check] even without purposely asking me.

Royal Academy is like the university in Japan, the school buildings are divided on several grounds.
First, the high class school with scholarly presentations' building like an auditorium and a library are located in front of the royal castle.
The Noble School and Maiden School are in the Noble Street. Nobles go to each of them. The Maiden School is the so-called Finishing School. Lilina, the daughter of Gururian's Viceroy attends the former.

The one with the uniform we've been seeing from a little while ago is the Preschool near the airport. The Preschool isn't only attended by the wealthy commoner's children, but also the children of honorary nobles.
Beside the Preschool, there are the Knight School and Magic School, both which require wide plot of land.
It seems there are artificial underground labyrinths inside the Magic School's plot. It's not even as big as one Area of Selbira Labyrinth though, so it's probably completely for the students' training.
There are the [Labyrinth of Beginning] that's 50 square meters wide and has five floors, and the [Labyrinth of Trial] that's 100 square meters wide and has 10 floors.
Though it seems it's free for the Royal Capital's nobles to use, you have to pay some fee to enter and when you defeat a monster.
And then, monsters that have gotten stronger deep in the labyrinth are taken to the arena at the edge of the Royal Capital to fight against crime slaves as a show which also serves to cull their number.

I knew this information from the letter of Princess Menea who's attending the Magic Academy.

While explaining such, we pass by the Royal Capital's Preschool Academy.
It seems Arisa is remembering her former life, she's sending some nostalgic glances.

◇

Passing through a sturdy-looking inner wall, our carriage enters the Noble Street.
This Noble Street's area is extremely wide, it's as wide as the whole Muno City. By the way, the Royal Castle takes around 30% of the area.
Originally, the Royal Capital was only the Noble Street, but it became too crowded 300 years ago, and after getting repeatedly widened every 100 years, the Royal Capital has become like the present state with the concentric circles inner walls.

We leave the main street that goes to the royal castle, and enter the block that extends to the lower noble area.

"Hey, where is it?"
"It's right after this block, we're close."

After passing under the shadow of an aqueduct and advancing for a while, we got to the place where an entire mansion took the whole block.

"Wall~?"
"The entrance is taking a day off nanodesu!"
"H-hey! Don't tell me this luxurious mansion is our Royal Capital's mansion?"

No way.
This is the head office of Echigoya Firm.
This one is for nobles' use, there are two more shops in the downtown for the commoners.

"You're mistaken. Look, you can see it now. It's the mansion with blue roof over there."
"Small."

--How rude.

The lot area is narrower than the mansion in the Labyrinth City, but the floor space is the same you know?
By the way, the price was far and away higher. The price in the Royal Capital is high no matter the world eh.

◇

"Welcome back, Master."
"I'm back."

I greet back an elderly man who's wearing butler clothes.
This person and the five maids behind him are professional I've employed from the Royal Capital's temporary personnel agency.
This is the first time I meet them since I left the arrangement to Ms. Miteruna. I've asked her to choose people who don't discriminate against Demi-humans.

The maids-san are all normal people, but this elderly man is a level 27 former explorer.
He was a scout during his explorer day so he's weak in a direct fight, but he should be fine against some average thieves alone.

The elderly butler guides us to the living room, and then we enjoy the blue tea that he's prepared.

Lulu has immediately gone to see the kitchen while bringing Arisa along. The beastkin girls are checking the mansion's security. Shiro and Crow are helping the beastkin girls.
Thus, only Mia and Nana are here.

"Shall I bring some sweets for Madam and the Lady?"
"....Madam."

Mia mutters so looking happy, but he was referring to Nana without a doubt.

"That is wrong, correcting it. I am Master's serv--"
"Sorry, but I have two tasks for you."
"I understood--"

I covered the latter half of Nana's line and gave some tasks to the elderly butler.
I ask him to hire some gatekeepers and guards in the mansion plot at night, and remodeling of the basement.

I'm thinking of changing the wine and food cellar at the basement to become treasure warehouse to attract thieves. It's also convenient that it has other entrance beside on the mansion.

◇

I install a teleportation Carved Seal Board in the bedroom, change into Kuro figure and teleport to the Echigoya mansion next door.

The teleport destination is Tifaliza's office.
Only people related to Kuro are allowed to be here, so I've always teleported here whenever I have some business in the Royal Capital.

"Kuro-sama."
"Oh my, Kuro-sama! Your white hair is wonderful today too. This room is dirty as you can see, so please come to my room as the manager."

Tifaliza bowed and only spoke a few words, but the newly appointed manager girl seems to be burning with rivalry with Tifaliza, she's approaching me pro-actively.
It's truly the demonstration of [They're hitting]. I don't need to say what are.

She's one of the female explorers who were left in the Ivy Mansion.
They were people without aim, but since they were formerly nobles, they could read and write of course. I've employed them in Echigoya Firm, since there were educated people available.
Among them, this newly appointed manager girl was from lineage that extended to some Royal Capital's noble and unexpectedly well-known, so it was convenient.

"No need for greetings. Show me the sales list and the reservation list."
"Here--"
"Here it is. Kuro-sama."

The new manager girl took the document that Tifaliza had presented and gave it to me. There's no difference regardless of whoever gave it right?

Documents prepared by Tifaliza are easy to read like always.

"The hair growth medicine and the vitality medicine are selling better than anticipated huh."
"Yes, ever since we gave some samples to the baroness and the viscount who acted as loudspeakers, orders have been coming until we're about to run out of stock."
"Is that so, that's good."

I've prepared around 1000 sets for both, yet they're almost sold out.
The vitality medicine is a medicine for energizing one part of men. It has superior power than the existing medicines, it also lasts longer. The luster skin medicines for women are also selling well, but not as good as the vitality medicines.
The basic-skin products are not really popular.

"The hair-growth medicines are 10 gold coins per bottle, and the vitality medicines are one gold coin per bottle, but I think they would still sell even for twice those prices. How about raising their prices right now?"
"I'll leave that to you. I'll put twice the amount of them compared to the last time to the

warehouse, do everything you can to get money in short term from the nobles, not in long term."
"Understood."

I bring the manager to the underground warehouse and take out medicines and built-to-order equipment from the Item Box to here.

Only me and the manager can go in-and-out of this underground warehouse.

Tifaliza and Nell are their seniors, but those two don't have fighting prowess, so they've been excluded for their safety.
It's like I'm ignoring the manager, but in her case, it's partly because she's volunteered for it, but she also has the influence of her parent's house, so something unreasonable probably won't befall her.

I've installed security facilities at the level of the Royal Capital in this underground warehouse.
Among them, there are an Orichalcum Golem that uses Philoshoper's Stone as its power source, and eight Bronze Golems that stand guard all-night long, so they could stop any intruder unless they have special ability that negate physical attack like Ban the True Ancestor.

They can't stop any intruder who can use space magic, but I'm not taking it into consideration since there are only few people who can use them.
As long as it's not Arisa, the Orichalcum Golem would probably knock that kind of intruder down before they could escape.

By the way, I've copied the beastkin girls fighting pattern into the Orichalcum Golem.
One Orichalcum Golem is about slightly weaker than Pochi. The eight Bronze Golems are weaker than an Orichalcum Golem even if they band together, but I've installed an algorithm that make them disregard any damage on their body.
Even Tama would find it difficult to run away from the cooperation of eight Bronze Golems and the Orichalcum Golem. No, Tama in Ninja Mode probably could easygoingly run away from them....

I put the payment, the gold coins and some precious metal ingots, into my Item Box.
There's an unusual metal among them.

"What is this platinum ingot?"
"Yes, we received it from a weaselkin merchant we were acquainted during the merchant assembly. Usan-dono and--"
"The name doesn't matter. Buy three times this amount next time, you can use the money as long as it matches the market price."

I've been searching for platinum since it's needed for an indispensable magic tool. I've only gotten around 10 grams of it from the magic-mining, so I won't miss this chance to acquire kilograms worth of platinum.

Still, it's been a while since I heard that weaselkin's name.

◇

"There are many upper nobles who wish for credit transactions...."
"Reject it. My Master wishes to collect the nobles' money until the auction that's held after the Kingdom Conference. If there is anyone who threatens us, lodge a complaint to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister knows the true owner of Echigoya Firm. He will surely give a hand."

The tiger has lent his leather, so I'll fully make use of it without reserve.
I've already defeated two demon lords that appeared in this kingdom, so there is no need for reservation.
Moreover, some secret agents of the Prime Minster are hiding nearby this mansion, if anything happened, they probably would intervene before I called him.
Knights who seem to be the Prime Minister's private army are regularly patrolling the area, looks like they're here as a deterrence for other nobles.

"Kuro-sama, this isn't directly related to Echigoya Firm, but I want you to hear this--"

When I'm confirming Tifaliza's stock letter, the Manager tells me the rumors she's gathered.

Last night, a monster appeared from the Royal Capital's underground, it went into hiding in the sewer after eating people who were present at the place. It seemed to be a Scarab Beetle-type of monster with red figure.
The place where the monster appeared was the jail, and there might be some criminals who had escaped by taking advantage of the disturbance.
It seems the guards have been searching criminal slaves called [Violet] in the sewer since this morning.
I've tried searching the map, but the only monsters in the Royal Capital are the tamed monsters accompanied by Tamers.
If I exclude the Royal Academy's labyrinths, there are only ghost-type monsters here and there in the underground tunnel and the slum quarter. The soul magician who dwells in the underground tunnel seems suspicious, but there's no insect-type monster anywhere to be seen.
There's a very small group of orcs in the underground tunnel, but they probably won't make a blunder that would get them caught by the searching guards.

There are a lot of groups with high levels and great fighting powers in the Royal Capital, so it should be no problem even if I don't butt in.
I think I should give some warning to the people I know when I get back to the mansion just in case.

"By the way, what happened to Nell?"
"Yes, there's not enough people who can use life magic in the factory, so she's currently helping over there."

I see, so that's why I didn't see her.
I don't feel like I've come back to the Royal Capital before hearing Nell's peculiar way of talk. Maybe I should go visit the factory where Porina is later.

"I forgot. Here's a souvenir."

I give a necklace made of True Silver with a small gem attached to Tifaliza. It's a reward for her who's supporting Echigoya Firm silently.
It's a magic tool that has the effect of relieving fatigue, so I don't doubt that she'll work even harder now. It also has a secret function as an insurance, but if possible, I hope it'll stay an insurance.

I'm going to give silver earrings for the other staff members, I'll leave it to the manager before going out.
The one at the managerial position probably need better vanity to show, so I've prepared a necklace with gold chains and a big ruby for the manager.

Since it seems like it's hard for Tifaliza to put the necklace on her neck, I do it for her.
Tifaliza's white skin is turning red, maybe because I'm putting it from the front.

"It suits you well."
"Thank you very much."

She's expressionless like usual, but her voice is a half octave higher than usual.
She must be pleased.

I lightly wave my hand to reply Tifaliza's thank, and then teleport to the factory at the edge of the Royal Capital.

Part 12 - Royal Capital's Mansion (2)

Satou's here. It's said that necessity is the mother of invention. I think there was a time when I endeavored greatly to devise a program to make things easier.

◇

"Igniter tool that doesn't use magic power?"
"Yes, a self-alleged inventor claimed that it could be lit easier than an Ignition Rod, and the trial-product that he brought was indeed comparatively easier to use when we tried it. One needs to learn a little bit of the knack, but it should be easier than using a flint."

Porina told me such story when I was visiting the workshop's office.
Some self-proclaimed inventors have been coming here while bringing various inventions, it seems they were inspired by the kickboard.
Although most of the tools are useless, I've told Porina to buy anything that's even a little bit usable.
We're buying an idea with the prototype blueprint in exchange of one silver coin. If Echigoya is going to sell the tool, the inventor will get 10% of the profit from the sales.

Porina brings a box written with "17" from the shelf.
Looks like she's divided them by number since distinguishing them will be hard otherwise.

The inside of the box is a lighter the size of a hair spray.
Leaving the prototype before establishing a contract like this, I think the inventor is quite careless.

It's the same kind as the oil lighter I know although this one is a bit rustic.

It's perfectly the same with the lighter structure written in the notebook that I've gotten in the dark auction back then.
There isn't anyone with cheat-like skills that reincarnated or teleported people would have so this someone must be a teleported person related to Princess Menea. It's probably a teleported person that should've been dead but is actually, [alive all along.]

"It may seem very convenient, but it has a fatal flaw."

Porina speaks about the problem hesitantly toward me who's looking at the lighter full of interest.

--It's the production cost.

Although it's an item that should be profitable in other cities, there's no meaning here in Royal Capital that's getting abundant supply of magic cores from the Labyrinth City.

The production cost for Ignition Rod is cheaper than the calculated cost of this Lighter even in Royal Capital, which isn't as cheap as in the Labyrinth City.

Of course, on top of being a business, the price we get from calculating the production cost and the profit margin is such that it won't be able to compete with the Ignition Rod.
Moreover, compared to the Ignition Rod that's the size of a long chopstick, the prototype lighter is heavier and bigger.
The Ignition Rod is superior even in the convenience aspect in kitchens.

It'll only end up as a collector item of eccentric people in its current state.

"Porina, do you have the contact information of the inventor?"
"Yes, I have inquired it. The other party said that, 『I can come anytime』, so I could contact him with date and time that Kuro-sama wants. Would the workshop's reception room be alright for the meeting place?"
"Yeah, please do."

She's really well prepared.
Porina was originally wise enough you wouldn't have thought that she was a former baggage carrier, but I think she's become refined ever since she became the workshop head.
She probably has accumulated various experiences too, her level has increased by three compared to the last time I met her.

After telling the date and time to Porina, she sends a messenger from the next room.
I didn't hear the name of the inventor I was going to meet.

Now that I've completed my business, I hand out the souvenirs. I guess I'll go back after seeing Nell after this.
It's lunchtime now, so she's probably in the lounge or the dining room.

◇

"Hyu, Hyuro-hama"

Who the heck is [Hyuro].
Nell who was slurping a mouthful of noodles ended up saying [Kuro-sama] strangely.

"You can speak after you finish swallowing the thing in your mouth."
"Fes."

Nell slurps the remaining noodles down.
Guessing from this aroma and the color of the noodles--

"Is that Soba?"
"U, ugu. Y, yes, it's Soba ssu."

Soba with soy-sauce soup huh.
I've heard that there's a custom of eating Soba in the Royal Capital, but I heard it was in Sobagaki (buckwheat dough) form.

When I told that to Nell--

"I got to eat various strange dishes once a wandering cook came to my favorite diner 'round a month ago ssuyo. Half of the dishes were extremely bad though, so you'll have to brace yourself when you challenge a new one."

I asked what kind of dishes were they, but apparently the recipes were similar to the dishes in my former world. It probably ended up tasting strange since the cook tried to forcefully reproduce the ingredients and the flavoring using local products.

I was thinking of visiting the diner since it was lunch time anyway, but since the possibility is high that the cook is the same as the inventor who brought the lighter, I've decided not to.
I'm going to meet him anyway, and the girls would break their stomach waiting for me if I don't get back soon.

I asked Nell about the recent situation and affairs at the workshop a bit.
I've already handed her the souvenir of course. Looks like she rarely receives an accessory, her unusual tension when she was receiving it was impressive.
It's an earring that has philosopher's stone that's smaller than a grain of sand embedded, it also has magic recovery effect.
Please take care of it.

--The workshop's efficiency must be going to be increased with this.

After telling Arisa that I would go back now with [Telephone], I teleported back to the mansion.

◇

I could smell the aroma of Soba and Tempura when I got back to the mansion.

"Satou."

Mia who's come to greet me leads me by hand to the dining room.
Tama and Pochi run from the kitchen and join us halfway through.

When we arrive at the dining room, Nana and the others are currently preparing the plates.
I feel sorry for the maids who don't have anything to do, so I urge everyone to sit down and leave the job to the maids.

"Welcome back~, you're coming too fast after the『Kaeru Call』earlier. You should've contacted me earlier."

....A, Arisa. [Kaeru (come home) Call], what era are you from.
Well, no use retorting that after all this time.

The Tempura Soba on the table is more important right now.
Everyone starts eating with the signal of [Itadakimasu]. Pochi and Tama have become able to use chopsticks recently, but it seems they can't hold all the Soba with them, they've exchanged them with forks.

I quickly dip the noodle on the soup and gulp it one go.
When I chew it, the aroma of Soba and the salty-sweet taste of the soup spread in my mouth.
A Japanese person should be eating this with slurping sounds, but since it seems to be a breach of etiquette in Shiga Kingdom, I refrain myself.
In fact, Lulu is scolding Arisa who's eating the Soba messily.

"Like I said, eating Soba like this is the right thing to do!"
"You can't do that even with such excuse. Master would dislike you if you eat vulgarly like that you know?"
"That's impossib~le. Right, Darling."

Who the heck is Darling.
After biting a shrimp tempura called Shiga Sakura Shrimp, I continue eating the Soba in Shiga manners like before.
They call it Sakura Shrimp, but the size is of normal shrimp. It probably got the name from its sakura-colored shell.

"Look, even Master eats elegantly."
"You traitor~~~~"

I'm enjoying the Soba that I haven't had for a long time with Arisa's scream as the BGM.

By the way, Tempura Soba was selected because Lulu consulted Arisa when she found the buckwheat flour in the food warehouse.

"It was delicious, Lulu."
"Thank you very much, Master."

Lulu's voice sounds happy enough to make you think like there was a music note attached at the end.
It sounds nice no matter how many times I hear it.

"Hey~, since it was my idea, praise me too."
"Right, I felt like having Soba today, so good job Arisa."

'Praise me', Arisa asks for more praise upfront.

"Don't say that with only words, show it with actions too."

I would have praised her more if she didn't assume the posture of wanting to kiss.

"Arisa is a spoiled child nanodesu."
"Spoiled child~?"

Pochi shoves a Tempura into the mouth of Arisa who's closing her eyes. Tama also thrusts a Tempura from the other side.

"Mogaga. Wait,yougyys. Nn-gu. Hey why were they Perilla Tempura. There are the shrimps and octopuses ones right!"
"I mean, Lulu said that Perilla is good for your health~?"
"Shrimp-san wants Pochi to eat it, it said nodesu."

Ignoring the heartwarming children's bickering, I talk to Lulu.
Liza should be onto them after a bit more.

"Where did you get the Perilla?"
"Mia-chan found it in the garden."
"Happened during a stroll."
"That's amazing, Mia."
"Nn."

I'm impressed she could find it even though it could be easily mistaken with weeds.
I quite like Perilla Tempura.

◇

After the lunch, I go to tour the Royal Capital with everyone.
We're riding two separate carriages. Both are rentals from Noble Transportation Guild.
Of course, that's including the coachmen. We're going to depend on them during our stay in the Royal Capital.

I have two big carriages in my storage, but it's hard to use them in the Royal Capital where there are a lot of people with appraisal skills gathered considering the technology in them.
Although my own carriage that has floating function feels better, the carriages we're riding right now are high-class among the rentals themselves, we don't feel much vibrations in the cabin.

"So, where are we going?"
"Right--"

The tourist attractions of Royal Capital are the royal castle's sakura tree and the hanging garden behind the royal castle, but I've fully enjoyed the former yesterday, and I'm going to attend the garden party at the latter after the peerage ceremony.

The best tourist attraction that commoners and lower nobles can visit means the Great Water Fountain at the Royal Capital's Eight Passages. There are various sculptures on the water fountain, many themed statues are standing there. In addition, it has moving mechanism that changes depending on the bell that rings on timetable, I'm planning to see them in turns.

"It's blowing like pyuu, nodesu!"
"Just like Mia's magic~?"
"Really?"
"Nana-sama, it's amazing, look."
"Shiro, you'll fall to the fountain if you lean so much."

The youth trope are in high spirits after seeing the fountain.
There were fountains in the dwarf and elf villages too, but it seems that's irrelevant for these children.
I think this is the first for Shiro and Crow.

"It's pretty, but the water spray is cold. It'd have been pleasing if this was in the Labyrinth City."
"You're right. But water is precious there, so it's not possible isn't it?"
"You can put limitation on specific time, and anytime beside that it's going to only collect water, that works right."

Fumu, if we make it as a tourist attraction in front of the guild or in the guild's courtyard, it could become a nice healing spot.

--Bells that signify timetable begin to resound on various place in the Royal Capital.

"Waa, amazing! Look look Arisa! Master, please look at that, it's really pretty"

My thought comes back with the voice of Lulu that's one-tone higher than usual, calling me.

My eyes are unconsciously captivated with the scene before me.
I don't know if it uses water magic or force magic, but water rise from the springs around the fountain while ignoring gravity, forming many rings in the air.

And then the fountain blows water through those rings.
The rings rise while following the stream, and then disappear while leaving rainbow light.

Slightly afterward, nozzles under the water simultaneously blow water as if coloring the sky, and then the center fountain creates large flower-shaped pattern.
The falling water sprays create multiple layers of flower petals, falling sakura petals dance together with it in the square's sky.

--It's truly a fantasy spectacle.

Nevertheless, this wasn't just a mechanical device, but also magical huh.

Lulu admires that scene without speaking a word while grabbing my sleeve.
It's not only Lulu, everyone is gazing at the ever-altering shapes of the water festival.

....Mia, and also Pochi. I know your feelings, but would you close those gaping mouths.
I silently pushed and closed these two's mouths.

Part 13 - Inventor Boy

Satou's here. Recently people tend to shirk effort, but I think you will never get masterful insight without piling up efforts. It is said that your everyday effort will never betray you after all.

◇

The next morning after the Royal Capital sightseeing tour, I change into Kuro and teleport to the workshop where Porina is waiting.
I'm going to meet the inventor mentioned before.

"Porina, has he come?"
"Yes, Kuro-sama."

Porina who welcomed me guides me to the reception room.

The one waiting beyond the door Porina has opened is an unexpected person.

"Nice to meet you! My name is Aoi Haruka. I am not a noble despite having family name, so please do not misunderstand."

A 10-year-old boy who looks exactly like a girl introduces himself with polite language unbefitting of his age.
Aoi is a Japanese person that Princess Menea's Kingdom has summoned. It might be more correct to call him a person of Land of Rich Autumn Harvest Empire Japan, but let's not mind the detail.

"Nice too meet you, I'm Echigoya. I'm the chairman of Echigoya Firm."

Despite using the figure and clothes of Echigoya, my name in exchange column is still Kuro. Echigoya is a plain fake name of Kuro.

"I'd like to ask forgiveness for my rudeness, but is Echigoya-san a Japanese?"
"It's probably a different Japan than yours though."
"As I thought! I knew that there were other Japanese people who came to this world beside me!"

I make Aoi Boy to control his excitement with my hand.
I feel that his personality differs from when I met him as Satou, but this one might be the base one. He was with Princess Menea at that time, he might have denied the fact that he was a Japanese.

"Calm down. First, let's talk about our business."
"Yes! That Lighter is my masterpiece--"

Aoi Boy gleefully begins to talk about his hardships and the point for improvements.

It seems like he'll go on forever if left alone, so I tell him the cruel hard fact.

"We will not sell that Lighter as our product."
"B-but why? The mechanism is simple, and oil is common--"

I tell the shaken Aoi Boy about the problem with the Lighter as Porina has told me.
Yet the Aoi Boy still persisted, and only finally relented after I showed him the Ignition Rod.

"So, what kind of『Invention』are you going to make next?"
"Unfortunately, there is no next time if I can't sell the Lighter.... I have no more fund."

It seems he got the lighter money this time from pawning the ring that Princess Menea had lent him.
Shiga Kingdom doesn't have any bank that you can ask for financing after all.
There are firms and the merchant guild that can do that, but you'll become a slave if you can't pay back the money.

"Then, I have a suggestion for you--"

I offer Aoi Boy to become an inventor & advisor of Echigoya Firm, and to give him a laboratory in our Royal Capital's mansion and the research fund.
And just to make sure, I also offer him one gold coin as the initial salary, and to lend him the money needed to take Princess Menea's ring from the pawnshop.
Thus, Aoi Boy becomes a member of Echigoya Firm.

I have many reasons as to why I take him under me, but the biggest one is in order to avoid him developing something that will incur the [Gods' Wrath].
I tell Aoi Boy about the story I've heard from Corpse and Armor after forewarning him that it should remain a secret.
I especially warn him about the radio tower and train ahead of time since they're convenient and easy to come up. It won't be funny if the Royal Capital turns into ashes because of my funding.

My business with Aoi Boy is over, so I ask him about the present state of the other Japanese who was with him, Yui Akasaki.

It seems she was proposed by a high-ranking nobleman whom she was acquainted with from an evening party she attended with Princess Menea.
Looks like the other party was the one who fell for Yui. Falling in love to a 13-year old girl, he must be a lolicon.
It seems Yui didn't feel the same, but she was moved by intense attack from the other party and made a promise to marry him. They couldn't get married right away due to the difference in their social positions, so the guy has asked a noble related to him to adopt Yui as their daughter in order to secure her social position, allowing them to marry.
Aoi Boy is deeply moved as he tells me about how she's currently seriously studying etiquette in a class referred by that related noble.

"Echigoya-san, I want to introduce you to my Sensei--"

◇

Aoi Boy has led me to a downtown with some small workshops. You can reach the slum quarter after going through several streets from here.

"Sensei! Are you inside, Sensei"
"Maybe he's sleeping?"

The radar shows me that there's a luminous spot of a person inside.
Since the door seems to be shut with only bolt, I smoothly open it with [Magic Hand].

"It's open."
"Huh? You're right--. Sensei! It's me Aoi. I'm going in"

Aoi Boy skillfully evades the scattered written memos on the floor and goes in further.
I knit my brows when I look at the scattered memos on the floor. The double-inversion disk-type aerodynamic engine that I've made with a different theory and a circuit with different layout is drawn there.

"Echigoya-san, this person is Professor Jahad."
"I often heard about your name in the past."
"Hmph, I don't need some lip service."

Aoi Boy introduces me to a white-haired old man with bedhair wearing glasses that look like bottom of bottles. He has no special features besides his small stature despite being a human.
He's the rumored magician who's crazy for spinning things, and the person who wrote the books I saw in Seryuu city whom I had wanted to meet once.

I take out his works and the spinning top that he's created from Item Box to show him that it wasn't some lip service.
After seeing his works, he returned them back to me while hmph-ing, but his attitudes softened somewhat afterwards.

It seems he was a member of both the Royal Academy and the Royal Research Institute, but he fell into the trap of some researchers with noble lineage and was snatched both titles.
Now he's living a poor life by repairing magic tools in the downtown without any financial supporter.

I invited Prof. Jahad to be a researcher of Echigoya Firm, but his reply wasn't favorable.

"Hmph, I don't care with money. If you want to hire me, bring me the new type aerodynamic engine! I would even sell my soul to demon lords if I could see the artistic splendor of that double disk engine up close."
"You won't backpedal on it right."
"Not."

I clear some space in the room with [Magic Hand] and take out a spare double-inversion

disk-type aerodynamic engine from Storage. It couldn't fit into Item Box since it was too big.

I smile at Prof. Jahad whose eyeballs look like they'll fly out, and then we establish the contract.
This man will surely able to increase the performance of the aerodynamic engine even further.

◇

I leave arranging their rooms in the mansion, the laboratory, and all miscellaneous things to the new manager and Tifaliza.
The new manager seems to be happy about something, she's started taking actions gleefully.
Tifaliza is preparing documents about machinery indifferently.

The new type of aerodynamic engine is a national defense secret, so I've taken the one in Prof. Jahad's lodging and moved it to the new laboratory.

I've left him with the disassembly manual and the rough configuration.
The detailed blueprint only exist in the map of my memo column, so I'll be giving him the document about it later.

◇

After I've finished the minor business in Echigoya Firm, I take everyone to the second sightseeing tour of the fountain.
There's still some time until the fountain moves, so we're watching the street performers in the square in front of the fountain.

"Uhha! Nostalg!"
"Nyoronyoro~?"
"Kabayaki-san nanodesu!"

Arisa's tension is running high when she sees a street performer who's manipulating a snake with a soundless flute.

--Nostalgic?
Were such street performers popular in Arisa's hometown?

Pochi associated the snake with Kabayaki when she saw it.
She's just had a lunch a while ago, looks like Pochi's appetite never wanes.
Maybe I'll go with White Horn Snake and Eel Donburi for today's dinner.

When I was racking my brain about the side dishes, sounds of building collapsing and screams entered my ears.

"Master, I've found a monster at two o'clock direction. Going in for removal. Please the permission."

A gigantic level 30 cricket monster broke through a two-story building and jumped to the street.
Snake-like patterns are emitting red light on its black body.

"Nana, you stay here to guard Arisa and the others. Liza, go defeat the monster quickly. Pochi and Tama, help anyone who's injured. Mia, prepare the healing. The rest stay here with me."
"Yes, my Master."
"Understood."
"Aye!"
"Roger nanodesu!"

I'm checking the surrounding map while giving instructions to everyone.
The monster wasn't reflected in my radar just before this. Is it teleportation or summoning, I need to find out what kind of way monsters can be called in the middle of Royal Capital.

--Liza's spear was stopped for an instant by the red barrier that appeared before the cricket monster's body.

The spear tore its rind and armor, giving damage, but it couldn't defeat it in one blow.
Even though she didn't use any big technique, it's unbelievable that the defense of a level 30 monster could stop Liza's spear.

"Liza-san! That thing has『Magic Body Bestowal』state! I've never heard that kind of buff before, so go use some serious technique!"
"Understood!"

In accordance to Arisa's advice, Liza fills magic power into the spear enough to produce Magic Edge.

--Magic Body Bestowal?

It's Fiend Drug's effect!
As I took a sidelong glance at Liza's Spiral Spear Strike pulverizing the cricket monster, I searched for people who carried Fiend Drug in the Royal Capital, but I couldn't find anyone.

There shouldn't be many people who would carry fiend drug since it was thoroughly hunted.
Right then, an unpleasant thought flashes in my mind.

....They couldn't have thrown the fiend drug into the drainage to destroy evidence and ended up producing monsters right?

There should be books pertaining fiend drug in the forbidden library of the royal castle.
I'll go see the king as Nanashi and ask permission to enter the forbidden library tonight.

I receive a whitish magic core that Liza's collected and instruct everyone to rescue the people who've been buried under the collapsed building.
Fortunately, there was no casualty, the injured ones could all be cured with low level healing

magic.

I left the settlement to the dispatched soldier, and then we went home after enjoying the water fountain.

Lady Karina who should be receiving special training in the royal castle for her debut in high society was in the mansion, but I hardened my heart and sent her back to the royal castle. Crying while shouting, "Traitor", is making me look bad, please stop it.

I should go visit her during the special training while bringing some delicious things tomorrow.

Part 14 - The King and Nanashi

Satou's here. Looks like there's a genre [Misunderstanding] in manga. The powerless protagonist is mistaken for another powerful famous person, and then he gets rolled up in the maelstrom of trouble, there's a lot of story like that.

◇

I'm having an audience with the king in the evening of the day the monster showed up in the Royal Capital.

They exaggeratedly praised me for subjugating the Dog-head demon lord, and tried to force me a peerage called Duke Mitsukuni or something.

Duke Mitsukuni house seems to be a house that was established after the Ancient King Yamato had handed the throne to the second generation, at that time it was the state councilor who was famous for making social reform.
Looks like Duke Mitsukuni peerage was still conferred until after the fourth generation King had retired, but there was some circumstance, and afterwards, no one was given the peerage anymore.

I ended up hearing some interesting anecdote thanks to this, but since I wasn't interested with peerage and whatnot, I appropriately declined it.

The king seemed to think that I was dissatisfied with just the peerage, this time he suggested me the [Blue Territory] in the southwest region of the kingdom.
Blue Territory seems to be the place where seven cities were sacrificed in order for the Wild-boar King to destroy Furu Empire.

At the west of the Trade City and the South of Labyrinth City, there's the sea of trees where the cities are sleeping, it has become the den of monsters now.
In the past they managed to recapture the cities by sending armies many times over, but they couldn't hold against the overflowing monsters from the sea of tree and had to evacuated as the result.

Nanashi should be able to easily drive off the monsters in the cities, but keeping them off permanently seems quite laborious.
I'm not really interested in territory management and administration.

I often played city-building games, but in real world there are too many troublesome affairs, so I'm going to refrain from it.

Thus, I declined lightly, but the King and the Prime Minister openly looked disappointed.
They probably wanted me, who have the power to defeat demon lords, to recapture the cities with that power.

◇

After a little bit of idle talk, I get to the primary objective.

"Your Majesty, I received some report from Echigoya people about monsters appearing in the Royal Capital see."

I actually encountered one myself, but let's make this a second-hand story.

"As expected of Nanashi-sama. You're quick to know. Prime Minister."
"Yes. Please let me explain from here. We have received reports of gigantic monsters appearances in the metropolis area for the past several days now. Every monster suddenly appeared from underground, and after destroying the buildings and people on the area they appeared, they disappeared into underground."

So it really came from underground.

"There have been seven sighting reports up until now, but there are only two cases where the monsters were able to be killed before they could escape; one was when a Shiga Eight Sword, Lord Ryouna made it in time, and the other was when some Mithril explorers happened to meet one by chance."

Ryouna was that six-packs amazon right. The explorers should be about us.
I tried checking the map, but there was no sign of the monsters underground.
According to the report, all seven monsters had red rope-like pattern. It wasn't only insect-type monsters, there were also rat-type monsters.

"Did you try to pursue the fleeing monsters?"
"Yes, when we dispatched the Royal Capital soldiers to search underground, they found the remains of the aforementioned monsters. There were three monsters that had died from debilitation, one from decomposition, and one from some kind of blade and magic."
"Decomposition and debilitation?"

Leaving aside the killed monster, were the four others died by themselves?
Ga Hou the orc from Duchy Capital did say to me that there were other orcs in the Royal Capital, so they might have exterminated the underground monsters.

"We had the Royal Research Institute to study the monsters, but we didn't get any useful information."
"Then I'll tell you one. I have an acquaintance with appraisal skill in the Royal Capital, and that acquaintance confirmed that the monster had『Magic Body Bestowal』state when they saw the monster."
"『Magic Body Bestowal』is it?--It cannot be."

Prime Minister-san seems to remember about the existence of Fiend Drug too, he's at a loss of words while looking bitter.
He probably recalled the illicit manufacturing incident in the Labyrinth City from before.

Marquis Kelton who was the prime offender at that time avoided punishment by using the influence of his faction if I'm not mistaken.

Afterwards, I found out about a demon lord-worshiping group called [Light of Liberty] that was trying to smuggle the fiend drug outside the kingdom.

"Prime Minister, how was the disposal of Fiend Drug?"
"Yes, the Royal Research Institute was responsible for the disposal."
"Did you hear what kind of method they use to dispose the drug?"
"No, I had instructed them to make it so that it couldn't be used again, but I did not hear about the detail."

Well, that's normal.
The Prime Minister probably doesn't have much free time.

"Perhaps they dissolved the fiend drug with some appropriate drug or acid and then flush it down the drainage?"

Or maybe they did without even processing it.

Prime Minister-san's eyebrows twitched when he heard me.
His face looks slightly pale but he's controlling himself quite good.

"I will summon the institute director and the one in charge immediately."

Prime Minister-san excuses himself to arrange the summoning.

"Hey, Your Majesty. Is there any document detailing fiend drug?"
"There is. The Royal Research Institute borrowed it once, but besides that time, it is stored in the Forbidden Library below royal castle."

Is it alright to lend a book outside from the forbidden library?
Well, it probably has low secret content.

"There's something I want to look up you see, won't you permit me to enter that forbidden library please?"
"What cold things are Nanashi-sama is saying. This castle is Nanashi-sama's castle too. You may go in and out any place you want."

No no, that rule is too sloppy.
The King guides me further through the private area of the royalties, to the forbidden library.

The forbidden library is located besides the treasure room, and a massive gate with powerful anti-intruder magic is installed on the place that leads to both.
The gatekeeper knights are level late 30s imperial guard knights, they seem diligent and steadfast.
Even though I'm with the king, they ask me my purpose and demand me to take off my mask, following the rule.
I show the face mask under the mask and then we pass through the gate.

The corridor splits to the treasure room and the forbidden library halfway through, we

continue the corridor that goes to the library.
The King is a good walker since he was a holy knight in his youth, but I feel bad letting an old man walks too far, so I take out a chair from my storage, make him sit on it, and carry it with Magic Hand.

We passed through 13 gates before we got to the forbidden library, but the gatekeepers of the third gate and beyond were not humans, but magic-flaw creatures <<Constructors>> like golems and living armors.
The gates were placed at fixed intervals in the corridor, showing the importance of the forbidden library beyond this.

After passing a double-layered door that seemed to be a barrier, we finally entered the forbidden library.
It smells of papers. The inside is dark, and it seems they've set the temperature and humidity at the level that are best for preserving books.

When the King holds up a medallion that's used as a pass, the light in the building is lit.
We get pass the entrance hall, and come to a room with lines of bookshelves that are as high as the ceiling.

I check the map, there's only one reader, the others aren't librarians, but around twenty work golems and living dolls.

"I was wondering who it was, so it's Your Majesty."
"Umu, are you in good health? You're a bookworm like always, never going to an evening party."
"Yes, luckily, the marriage proposal to Earl Lesseu returned with a blank paper."

The one talking to the King is the Sixth Princess. She's 18 years old, a year younger than Lady Karina.
Her hair is a bit brownish and black up, she's wearing a neat tiara.

Earl Lesseu is probably the young lord-san that came out as a topic about his crushing in the idle talk before.

The Sixth Princess turns her strong-willed blue eyes that are behind the silver-trimmed glasses toward me.

"Who is this person in suspicious clothing? A new guard?"
"Be careful with your tongue. This one is the hero Nanashi-dono."
"Pleased to meet you, Ojou-sama."

The matter about Nanashi being mistaken as the Ancient King Yamato seems to be a secret for only the King and the Prime Minister.
I greeted the Sixth Princess in friendly manner, she greeted back out of courtesy after showing displeased expression, and then she gets back to her own study.

Afterwards, the King guides me to an eight-armed Golem deep inside.

"Nanashi-sama, this is the『Librarian』of this forbidden library."
"Your Majesty, Today, What kind of, Book?"

The librarian Golem asks in disconnected synthetic voice.

"O『Librarian』, with my authority as the King of Shiga Kingdom, I grant Nanashi-sama here the permission until the third layer of the archive. Process it."
"Yes, Performing, Processing."

There are four layers in this forbidden library.
That means the last layer is not allowed huh. Well, I can find out the title of the books with map item search anyway, I can just intrude my own if there's something I want to read.

"Nanashi-sama, I think you might know this already, but the last layer can only be entered by the current king of the kingdom.『Librarian』has memorized the list of the books, so I would go fetch it for you if there is any book you need, please pardon me."

No no, no way I can let the king be a gofer.
I couldn't say that I would intrude it on my own, so I lightly replied, "I'm counting on you when that happens."

After sending the King back to the surface, I hurriedly got back to the library, and began the research of fiend drug with the help of the『Librarian』and the living doll helpers.

◇

After I've finished researching the matter, I teleport back to the workshop in Kuro disguise.
There's an entrance to the sewer nearby.

Entering the door that's locked with a padlock, I descend into the sewer.
Swarms of bats and rats attacked me, but I haphazardly scattered them away with [Light Stun].
It's been a long time since I used this magic.

I fly through the sewer by relying on the map to collect filthy water with [Magic Hand] from 128 points including the places where the incidents happened.

I saw the remains of two monsters with red rope pattern.
Both are eaten by rats and insects, but there's a magic core in one of the remains. It's a magic core that's whiter than vermilion.

I collect both remains just in case.
I'll deliver them to the Royal Research Institute later.

Since I'm already close to it, I change into Nanashi like when I met Ga Hou, and intrude upon the place where the orcs dwell.

"Heya, nice to meet you. I'm not your enemy, so could you please put away that dangerous

spear?"
"You do not have any choice but to die now that you've seen this place. Prepare yourself."

A young male orc wearing a hood over one of his eyes and holding a magic spear informs me so.

I grab the thrust spear that has left red traces behind.
It's a sharp thrust, though not at Liza's and Shiga Eight Sword First Seat's level. The magic edge is quite resolute too, some half-assed magic shield won't be able to block this.

"Impossible! Even Ga Hou could barely able to dodge my spear! Who the heck are you!"

I wish you asked that first.

"I'm Nanashi, a friend of Ga Hou who lives under Duchy Capital."
"S-so you're Nanashi-dono! I've heard about you from Ga Hou. Please forgive my rudeness earlier."
"Yeah, I don't mind."

Ri Fuu is an orc who's 200 years younger than Ga Hou.
He guides me into the village of orcs. There are a bit less than 20 orcs inside. Most are from the same generation as Ri Fuu, but there are three small orcs too.

It's late at night now, but for the orcs who live underground, the time when the surface people sleep is the time for them to be active.

"We only produce the next generation orcs when our members decrease. In truth, they are newborns after 150 years, everyone has been spoiling them, embarrassingly."
"That's not true! Ri Fuu is mean!"

Besides a bit of physical differences, the orc children look the same as human children.

"Thanks for waiting. They're feast brought by Nanashi-san. Everyone, you can eat after giving your thanks."
""""Okay!""""

I gave them ingredients I had bought in the Duchy Capital, though there were also a lot of different kind of meat and seafood from the labyrinth. They were most pleased with the Japanese Radishes from Kuhanou Earldom.
I ask the orc wives who are cooking orc dishes if there's anything strange in the underpass.

"Umu, the rat monster that we fought back then was an unusually tough monster. There were even injured people even among us."

So the underground monsters were really defeated by the orcs.

"Yeah, it'd have been dangerous if Ri Fuu wasn't there."
"This guy even mistook it as a demon."

"I mean, there's no monster that can deploy that kind of defensive wall."

The defensive wall that the young orcs mentioned is probably the thing that stopped Liza's spear for an instant.
It wouldn't have been strange if there were casualties with their levels indeed.

"Strange huh, I guess it's that underground creatures have been increasing for the past month?"
"Even the rats become nice and plump, they're tasty."

Fumu, there must be some kind of nutrient source--hey, I hope it's not the fiend drug.

I tell Ri Fuu and several other village leaders about the possibility of dangerous drug mixed in the drainage, and ask them not to eat creatures living in the underground for a while.
Of course, I give them the share of food needed for that. I have a large amount of uneatable ingredients in the storage, so I give them one month worth of food that can be preserved.

"Nanashi-dono, why do you go this far for our sake?"

Ri Fuu asked such question, I guess I was too meddlesome.

--I wonder for what sake?

"U~n, I guess I'm just meddlesome. And also, I'm Ga Hou's friend."

If I leave my friend's relatives alone, and someone falls victim among them because of it, I'd feel remorse.
In addition, if I'm being meddlesome here, they might be willing to patrol the underpass or something.

"Oh right, since I'm being meddlesome and all, take these too. It's not like the holy sword that I gave to Ga Hou though."
"I-is this a magic sword?"
"There's a magic spear too!"
"Both are just weapons that can be easily filled with magic power, but I think they will be useful against monsters."

Sorry for them being mass products, I present the orcs with a magic sword, and a magic spear made by Echigoya Firm. Their battle power should be increased now.
After receiving words of gratitude from the orcs, I leave their dwelling.

--Now then, it's the Royal Research Institute tomorrow.

I'd hate it if the shops we're going to tour get temporary closed or broken from monster disturbance since I didn't deal with it early.

Now, for the sake of playing happily, let's put an extra effort!

While basking in the sunlight with my whole body, I fired myself up.

Part 15 - Carelessness of the Royal Research Institute

Satou's here. Unlawful dumping is a problem in Japan, and it's also a problem in another world. There's a seriously bad unlawful dumping among many....

◇

"T-then, you're saying that you left the disposal of the fiend drug to the associate contractor!"

The Prime Minister's subordinate roared at the Royal Research Institute's director.
I'm also speechless beside him.

The morning of the next day, as Kuro I joined the Prime Minister's subordinate who went to the Royal Research Institute to watch the state of things.

"N, no. From what I understood, it should have been fighting spirit medicines that were expired. I never thought that it was such a dangerous medicine like Fiend Drug..."

The director who's sweeping his sweat really seems like he didn't know that it was Fiend Drug.
On the other hand, the woman who appears to be a secretary, standing behind him, looks pale. I direct the Prime Minister's subordinate's attention to the secretary.

"The woman over there, you seem to know something. If you speak honestly, I'll talk to Prime Minister-dono so that it won't become a case of treason."
"....Ha, treason?! S-such thing, I never"

The pale secretary falls on her knees to the floor.
We succeeded getting the circumstances from the director and the secretary with the help of an Inquisitor the Prime Minister subordinate had brought.

Foolishly, due to the secretary's mistake, the disposal document for [Fiend Drug] had been misplaced with the one for [Fighting Spirit Medicine].
Normally, the drug would have been destroyed by mixing it with acid first before dumping it to the sewage, but since it was mistaken as [Fighting Spirit Medicine], it was only dissolved in water before being dumped into the sewage.

"--H-however, even though it was dumped to the sewage, it shouldn't be enough to make monster transformation happen. Even if you orally take the『Fiend Drug』, you would need to do it dozens of times before the symptom for monster transformation surfaces. In my humble opinion, the cause of the monster disturbance might be something different...."
"Nonsense. --Take them."

The director insisted, but the PM's subordinate curtly cut his talk, and ordered the Prime Minister's soldiers to take the two away. Looks like they're going to entrust them to the examination specialist.

Since the PM's Subordinate had ordered a low-class official to inspect the actual disposal site, I took that opportunity to tag along.

◇

"Garbage disposal huuh? That's not something great official-sama and noble-sama need to care."
"Just answer the question."

The low-class official pressed a question on a manservant clothed in rag.
This man isn't a staff member, but someone taken from the slump quarter to dispose lab animals and filth.

The manservant guides us to the dumping ground.

It's a cylindrical room made of flat concrete-like substance.
There's a 5-meter big hole in the center of the room, and it's 10-meter long down below until the water surface.

"Don't ya got too close to it. A while ago, a newcomer fell and became the prey of slimes...."

--Slimes?
There are some in the underground tunnel nearby, but there doesn't seem any directly below us.

"Huuh? Visitors? Can I throw this garbages now?"
"Official-sama, do you allow?"
"Leave it for la--"
"Wait, we don't mind, throw it."

I interrupt the low-class official, and let another man who came to the room later to throw the garbage.

....It's the dissected corpse of the monster yesterday huh.

Hm? The rat-type monster corpse doesn't have its hind legs. I think the back meat and the breast meat are also taken a bit too much if it's for samples.

I watch the corpse being dumped while only taking a sidelong glance at the low-class official who's grimacing from the putrid smell.
The moment the monsters' blood touch the water surface, the slimes in the underground tunnel gather.

"W-wait, Sir!"

I jump to the water surface while hearing the flustered voice of the manservant behind me.
I activate Sky Drive just before I hit the water, and take care not to touch the corpses and

the slimes.

I illuminate the water surface with a Light Drop.

There are no red rope-like pattern like on the monster's corpses on the slimes. Instead, many black bugs are stickied to them. It seems the slimes here only feed on carrion.

I gather tissue samples from several slimes and put it into organized test tubes.
I'll have the Royal Research Institute to check these and see if they have the fiend drug's residue and effect.

Before leaving, I'll confirm something with the manservant earlier.
He'll probably feign ignorance or lie even if we cross-examine him, so I ask him after I've made sure that the low-class official has gone back ahead.

"I won't fault you since monster meat are also eaten in Labyrinth City, but there are many that are rotten or toxic. There are also some that can spread illness, so be careful okay."
"Yeah, we know."

So they really take meat from lab animal's corpse and sell it in the back channel huh.
....It seems the slum quarter was hit with epidemics several years ago, I wonder if the cause was the meat brought by these guys.
It might be good to create epidemic prevention manual.

"We let the neighboring rats and strays to eat the meat going bad y'see. If they die, the slimes will eat them if we just throw them to the Clean Water Facility pond y'see."

Maybe I should check the slimes that are in the Clean Water Facility located near the edge of the Royal Capital.

Right, if they take the meat out, they might even take the drug that should have been disposed out too.
I've already checked on the map that the fiend drug doesn't exist in the Royal Capital, but just in case.

"If there's any drug that's hard to dispose, I'll buy it from you--"

I tell so to the man in low voice, and tell him one of the bars in the downtown managed by secret agents of the Prime Mainister.
With this, it should be easy to retrieve the drugs that have leaked outside. I'll leave the rest to the Prime Minister.

I go to the Water Purification Plant in the downtown, and collect the slimes that are attracted to the monster corpse I've thrown from storage.
I'll have the Royal Research Institute staff to analyze the rest.
I think I can analyze it myself with the facility in the Ivy Mansion, but doing everything myself is annoying right.

◇

Let's sort out the information for a bit.

In the end, the things I know are--

- The fiend drug was dumped to the sewage without proper processing.

- There's a possibility that it has been spread to the creatures living underground through the slimes.

- The Fiend Drug was mistaken with [Fighting Spirit Medicine].

This medicine has some similarity with the fiend drug, so it might be sold illegally in the downtown.

- People of the slum might have taken the fiend drug.

- The fiend drug isn't present in the Royal Capital.

Is that all?
No, there's one more.

- The monster disturbance might have nothing to do with the fiend drug.

Just when I thought I had seized the cause of the monster disturbance, the mystery got deeper instead.
I wonder if the case would be quickly settled were a great detective conveniently appear.

The phantom thief exists after all, wish the great detective too.

◇

"You're late desuwa!"
"Excuse me, I had some businesses to attend."

Lady Karina rebuked me as soon as I entered the state guest house's hall where she was doing special training.
The ones in this room are Lady Karina's maids, the dance instructor, and our girls.
Arisa is accompanying Nina-san in her work, so she's not here.

"Karina-sama, please concentrate."
"Satou will be my practice partner. You watch and instruct from there."

Lady Karina tells the instructor, and then she extends her hand to me.
Her cheeks blush a little, but her face looks somewhat sullen.

Well, I am late, guess I can be her dance partner.
I'll dance with our girls too once Lady Karina's practice is over.

"Then, I'll be keeping you company."

I take Lady Karina's hand and go toward the center of the hall the size of a classroom.
I lead Lady Karina while matching the dance music that Mia is playing.

When I dance with Lady Karina, my chest is too happy my consciousness feels like it'll soar, but I weather the storm with the help of prime number and pi.

Her dance is straightforward and manly like usual.
However, it seems she's been working hard, she's improved leap and bound better compared to the dance before.

"You've worked hard. You're quite better than before."
"--T-that's obvious! Because I endured it even while the knight order were watching the practice. Sa-Satou will dance with me in the real thing too!"

--U~n, isn't it impossible in the real thing.

During the dance party the night before the Kingdom Conference, the party where upper nobles higher than and including viscounts gather is separated with the party where lower nobles lower than and including baron gather.

There is no such rule, but like an unspoken agreement, it seems nobles that don't have much rank don't mingle with them.
To be more specific, the upper nobles side are the dukes, marquises, earls, and viscounts, but there are some cases where baron and baronet can also participate. A chevalier like me is prohibited from participating.
Lower nobles side are barons, baronets, and chevaliers, but viscounts can also participate. Nobles higher than and including earls never participate in this side.

Of course, Lady Karina is going to escort Baron Muno who's treated like an earl as a territory lord, she's going to attend the upper noble dance party, so it's impossible for us to dance together.
It's probably going to be another story if I were her fiance, but that's exactly why doing that means announcing we're engaged, so I'll be refraining.

"I cannot participate in the dance party of upper nobles so--"
"You can't desuwa!"

From her line of sight that was a bit higher than mine due to her heels, she interrupted my denial with a child-like anxious voice.

--Even if you said that.

"Excuse me. Karina-sama, some visitors have come for you."

Pina appeared right then, telling us about visitors. Good timing.

"They are waiting in the parlor, please come with Chevalier-sama."
"Visitors? Not for Father?"
"Yes, they are Sera-sama and Toruma Shimen-sama."

They're quite fast even though I was told that they were coming yesterday evening with an airship.
The two's blue luminous dots are in the parlor of the guest house alright.

I postpone the problem and go to the parlor where the two are waiting.

Part 16 - Invitation to Breakfast Gathering

Satou's here. Maybe due to the fact that we could frequently send mails even to a far away place, unlike in the past, I feel that I rarely felt distant.

But, it sure is mysterious when you directly meet and various things come to be talked about.

◇

"Grandfather asked if you'd like to have a breakfast with him."

After greeting each other, Sera cut to the chase.

It'd have been a tempting invitation if the other party were a young woman, but since the it's an old man, and an authority of a nation at that, 'breakfast' probably means more like a meeting.

Now then? The duke probably invites me to a breakfast in order to solicit me to come under his wings.
We're not only explorers who hold Mithril Plate, but there's the matter of Liza defeating the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords too, so the possibility is high.

"I am honored, but is it alright for a low ranking noble like me to be summoned to Duke-sama's breakfast?"

I can't imagine those carefree Duchy Capital nobles ostracizing me, but not all of them should think favorably of me.
People from Marquis Lloyd's and Earl Haku's faction are probably alright, but people from Earl Bobi's faction who are related with Wings of Liberty seem like they'll bear a grudge.

"It's fine you know. Because even Ane-sama[1] approves Satou-san."

"--I feel honored."

By Ane-sama, she's talking about Ringrande, Hero Hayate's attendant right?
I don't remember doing anything that would make her approve me, but perhaps, she did because I won against Hero?

It's not like I can decline anyway, I tell Sera that I'll be attending the duke's breakfast gathering, and get Toruma and Karina who have been treated like air up until now to join the conversation, telling each other's situation.

"Then, you're saying that Head Miko-dono isn't feeling well?"

"No, it's not that she has fallen ill, however, she doesn't seem energetic. She rarely ever comes out of the consecration inner room, let alone the temple."

I wonder why?
Did she receive a new oracle or something?

"No the only new oracle was the one about the destruction of the newly appeared demon lord in the Labyrinth City."

Come to think of it, it should be near the time for Hero Hayato's call.
I have to ask what's happened to the demon lord that was prophesied to appear in the Weasel Kingdom.

....The are only five of them remaining isn't it?
Please don't appear all at once in the world.

I throw away that ominous thought far beyond the beyond, and add the plan [Visit Head Miko] on the Memo Pad in the Exchange Column.
I'll go visit her once the business in the Royal Capital are all over.

Toruma then speaks some strange thing, probably to change back the flow of conversation.

"According to my brother, Satou-dono is also popular in the Labyrinth City."

What's with the [Also].
Since when was I popular--No, I guess I'm relatively popular with younger girls.

"Elderly and children seem to be fond of me since a long time ago."
"My, oh Satou-san."

Sera gracefully laughs to me who replied jokingly, but Lady Karina reacts questionably.

"....It's not only little girls."

Lady Karina muttered so, it was a voice so small only me who had [Attentive Ear] skill could hear.
I see, they all looked younger from my point of view, but with this body, there were girls who were the same age and older.

"However, I heard that you were close with some foreign princess and a daughter of a noble your age?"

Toruma who couldn't read the mood like always stated such remark while ignoring Lady Karina's mood.
Even Sera waited for my reply with a serious face.

By princess, did he mean the Noja Princess, Mitia?
A same-age noble daughter, I guess it's either Zena-san or the daughter of Baronet Dyukeli?

"Both are just acquaintances I knew from a little incident. We don't have special relationships."

When I asserted so, the girls let out relieved sighs.
Lady Karina has met those girls before, so she should have known our relationship anyway.

"What, is that it. Since Satou-dono is still young, why don't you become famous as a philanderer in the high society."
""Toruma Oji-sama!""

Sera and Lady Karina reprimanded Toruma's crude remark.

....Say something like that only between men.

◇

Even though we often exchanged letters, conversing like this complement subtle nuances that can't be conveyed through letters.

While Sera is telling me the state of each of the Duchy Capital's orphanage people, I also tell her about the Labyrinth City's orphanage and training school for explorers.
I tell my activities in the Labyrinth City as plainly as possible.

She's also told me the present state of the sealkin children whom Nana cared, I'll tell Nana about it later.

Still, Lady Karina is shy with strangers like always.
Even though she could talk normally with me and Toruma, she only replied with brief words like "Yes", or "That's right", when Sera talked to her, the conversation couldn't continue.

It's like she's reserved toward Sera.
Since Toruma followed up with, "Karina is shy with strangers like always huh" when that happened, Sera didn't seem offended.

After we've told each other our situations, Toruma asks about the airship incident.

As begged, I tell him about the details of the raid against Duke Bishtal, in exchange I ask about the suspicion toward Marquis Lloyd.
It seems Marquis Lloyd had willingly agreed to be inquisition-ed and proved his innocence.

I'm glad that his suspicion has been cleared, but in the end, I don't get to give him prison-present.

And then, I understood that Toruma was going to talk about Lady Karina's confession-like match just before we departed Labyrinth City, but I stopped him from condemning other's people fault, especially in front of Sera.

Instead, Toruma, who knows the Royal Capital well, is going to guide me to the hidden

tourist attractions and stores in the night pleasure quarter. Of course gay bars are prohibited.
I said it implicitly, "Guiding to various kind of shops", so Lady Karina and Sera didn't notice it.

Since Sera and Toruma were invited to a diner with Duke Oyugock and the king, the enjoyable conversation was cut short, and we saw the two off.

◇

When the two have disappeared, Lady Karina asks a puzzling question.

"Sa-Satou, do you want to take Sera-sama as your wife?"
"No, Sera-san is my friend. In the first place, a Miko can't marry unless she returns to secular life you know?"

An Oracle Miko like Sera is probably not allowed to return to secular life.

"I-is that so..."

She leaks out sexy sigh beside me.
Perhaps, she's really fallen for me?

My heart slightly thumped when I saw Lady Karina's face that looked like a maiden in love.

--This is not good.

If I don't firmly draw the line with Lady Karina, I'm afraid that I'd cross it since I'm fond of her outward appearance.
If that happens, marriage surely awaits. I have to make a restraint.

"Besides--"

The flow of conversation is just right, I guess I'll say it.

"--The person I love is in a far away foreign country. I would never ask Sera-sama to be my wife."

Saying that Aze-san is my lover or wife would make it a lie, but [The person I love] should be barely safe.
I've been dumped many times already, but I want to love Aze-san as long as she does not dislike it. At the very least, I don't feel like getting discouraged in one or two years.

"....L, lie."

Lady Karina reflexively denied it.
I saw large drop of tears spilling from her eyes.

....Apparently, her marriage proposal when we were leaving Labyrinth City was serious.

I feel slightly guilty, my chest hurts, but giving the final words just before she enters the high society is probably good for her courtship.
While deceiving my sense of guilt with that excuse, I speak more.

"It's true you know? She's a bit older than me, but she's cute."

After hearing my utmost sweet words, Lady Karina turned her heels and ran toward her own room.

Sorry, but I cannot run after Lady Karina. I'll ask maid-head Pina or Arisa to care for her.

....Ah, it's been a while, I want to see Aze-san.

The last time we talked with Telephone was about [Sakura Dryad] and [Sakura Drop], so it feels like I haven't talked to her for a long time.

--Good grief, I'm usually the one being dumped, so I never thought that being the dumping one was this hard.

◇

"Chevalier-sama! The situation at the castle seems strange somewhat."

As if mowing down my melancholy, combat maid Erina who rushed to the entrance hall was being noisy.

"What kind of strange?"
"There's a lot of knights-sama going in and out. Moreover, it's strange that they are galloping horses even though it's inside the castle walls."

Fumu, I open the map to see if there's a large outbreak of monsters in the Royal Capital, but nothing like that is happening.
After looking at the flow of the knights at the garrison, there are only people from three knight orders that are frequently going in and out.

I wonder what's happened.
There are a lot of people who seem to know about it, but there are only a few who would tell military matter to Satou.

The king and the prime minister seem busy too, I guess curious Nanashi will go visit them later at midnight.

I asked Erina to tell me if she learned what happened, and then I went to the kitchen alone.
I've decided to prepare a mountain of whale karages and various cakes so Lady Karina can binge eat and divert her attention at least.

This mansion has heat-retaining warehouse and refrigerator magic tools, so she can just take them out whenever she wants to eat.

◇

An unexpected guest waited for us who had gone back to our mansion.

"I'm sorry that I kept you waiting."
"What, do not mind it. It was I who came without announcing first."

Julberg-shi who's wearing the white armor of holy knights composedly replies.
The people in the parlor are me, Liza, Julberg-shi, and the third seat of Shiga Eight Swords, Heim-shi the [Weed] whom I've just met for the first time.

Heim-shi is investigating Liza's strength, he's been sending probing glances toward her since awhile ago. If Liza were of the same race, she would have won sekuhara appeal.

By the way, Heim-shi's armor is also the white armor of holy knights, but it's been devilishly remodeled to the point that you wouldn't believe they're the same model. At least please stop adding those meaningless horns on the shoulders.

"Let's get to the point, what kind of business do you have?"
"Umu, there's going to be a banquet where Shiga Eight Swords gather tomorrow night in my mansion. His Majesty has granted me the good Oumi beef, so I'm thinking of treating everyone."

--The beef from the official farm we ate back then were delicious.

Besides me, Liza's face looks composed, but her presence feels like her heart has been captivated with the meat.

"I have invited other candidates of Shiga Eight Swords too. I want you two to come by all means."

It seems the candidates are Jeril who's a Mithril explorer like us, and five other people.
We couldn't exactly decline an invitation from the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords after all, so we accepted too.

There's a simple arena at Julberg-shi's mansion, so we have to make sure not to equip weapons in visible places in order to avoid fight.

I brought up the matter of the knights from Erina during our idle talk, but they only told me that it was a national defense secret.

--In other words, there's a situation that affects the safety of the nation huh?

1. Big sister

Part 17 - Someone who Squirms Behind the Incident

Satou's here. I've read in some book that when two people meet, dispute will happen. If the dispute can't be avoided, I hope they'll choose the way that won't cause casualty.

◇

"Good evening, Your Majesty. Royal Capital seems busy, has anything happened?"

When the night has grown darker, I visit the royal castle as Nanashi.

"If it isn't Nanashi-sama, so you have noticed it already. It's an embarrassing thing, a rebellion has occured in Duke Bishtal's territory--"

Ah, I forgot about that matter.
Come to think of it, the one who attacked the airship was the relative of the duke.

According to the king, they immediately contacted Bishtal Dukedom in emergency once the airship was attacked, but they never got any reply at all.
And so, when the neighboring nobles went to the dukedom to investigate, the eldest son of Duke Bishtal declared that he had established Bishtal Kingdom, and sent away the investigating nobles.

It's quite quick considering it hasn't even been several days.
They probably used birdkin people or flying-type tamed monsters to investigate.

And so, Duke Bishtal who was told that appealed to the king to deploy the national military, and then among the standing army, the three knight orders that had been scheduled for practice were deployed.
It seems the third knight regiment of the knight order that are famous for their swift marching speed are going to depart tomorrow, while the second and the sixth regiments will depart five days later.
The advance units, birdkins and wyvern riders, have already departed ahead of time.

"Fuhn, sounds rough."

I replied indifferently.
I'm sorry but, I don't intend to participate in a dispute between humans.

"Having conflict between humans during the『Demon Lord Season』like this is due to my lack of virtue."

That reminds me, it's said that conflict between humans during this season mostly don't exist.
The western part of the continent seems to be going to war too, looks like other world humans love war too.

The king lowers his head apologetically for his failure.
There's no need for him to apologize to me, but I guess it can't be helped since he's mistaken me for the ancient king.

I saw the blue marker of the prime minister on my radar, so I made the king raise his head.

◇

I receive the analysis report of the slimes' parts I gathered from before from the prime minister.
The result is already out even though it hasn't even been half a day huh.

--The Royal Research Institute people are capable.

I take a look at the document lightly.
According to the summary, the slimes seem to act as the concentrate and the carrier of the fiend drug.
However, just as the director had said, they concluded that even though normal creatures that eat these slimes might die under the influence of the fiend drug, the possibility is low for them to change into monsters.

For the sake of proving test, it looks like they will catch some slimes and rats from the underground tunnel nearby and let them predate each other like kodoku[W] in the suburb experiment building.

Several holy knights will be standing guard during the experiment, so it should be safe.

Since the investigation report about the director and the secretary has been put together with the analysis report, I peek at it out of curiosity.

...This is?

I was dumbfounded with the secretary's carelessness when she said that she got the document wrong, but apparently, there was something behind it.
The prime minister added the thing that isn't in the document.

"It seems there are demon lord believers behind the case."

Looks like the boyfriend of the secretary, a knight, is related to the organization that's similar to the [Wings of Liberty] from before, he has manipulated the documents in order to earn money by selling them through the illegal channel.
Quite a large amount of the fiend drug were taken away from the Royal Research Institute before they were disposed, falling to the organization's hand.

There's a high possibility that the fiend drug that was discovered in the trade city were taken from the Royal Research Institute.

From the story I've heard in the Labyrinth City back then, the [Wind of Liberty] that's hiding

in the Royal Capital differs from the [Wings of Liberty] from the Duchy Capital, rather than demon lord worshipers, they should be a [carefree occult association].

Then, the suspicious one is either the remnant of the [Wings of Liberty] that have come from the Duchy Capital, or the operatives of the [Light of Liberty] which holds influence in the western part of the continent.
I check both of their location on the map and tell it to the prime minister.

"....Locations, is it?"
"Yeah, I had my subordinates check on it you see."

He probably wouldn't believe it if I said that I had just checked it now, so I made it like so.
The king and the prime minister are praising, "As expected of--", but I ignore them since I'm in the middle of concentrating, looking for additional information.

The remnants aren't a big deal judging from their levels, but there's a level later-half-of-40s magician with scouting skill among the [Light of Liberty] people, so we need to be cautious.
The [Light of Liberty] also has a magician with [Summoning Magic] and a tamer with taming skill who are all around level 30s.

Looking from their skills, they likely know the truth behind the case.

"--You need to be careful with these three people okay. Especially against the scout, you'd better not sending only common soldiers, but someone with high combat prowess on par with a Shiga Eight Sword I think."
"As you wish."

The prime minister deeply thanks me for my advice.

I can arrest them as Kuro, but the noble mansion they're hiding seems like it has guests staying in it, it looks like it could be troublesome. Let's leave it to the prime minister.
The scout person seems like they'll escape, so I mark them.

The topic was diverted due to the talk about demon lord believers, but there's a little something that piqued me regarding the origin of the knight who smuggled the fiend drug.
He seems to be a distant relative of the supposed mastermind behind the [Illicit Manufacture of the Fiend Drug in Labyrinth City] back then, Marquis Kelten.

According to the prime minister, Marquis Kelten was cross-examined by an inquisitor in order to deny the suspicion of [Rebellion] from the fiend drug illicit manufacturing incident, and was declared innocent, so they didn't pay attention to this piece of info.

The fact that the inquisitor at that time is someone from a house that's involved with the rebellion in Bishtal Dukedom this time worries me a bit, but this isn't a conspiracy theory, not every incident must be related.

◇

When I teleported to Echigoya mansion, I got the regular contact from Hero Hayato in the weasel empire, but the one who did was a woman called Nono who's house-sitting.

"--Then, Hayato and the others have gone deep into the labyrinth chasing after the demon lord?"
"That's right. Hayato will defeat the demon lord this time."

A fleeing demon lord, that's rare.
So far, the demon lords were all battle maniac who revived themselves even after dying after all.

"Is that so, if he has the upper hand then it's okay. I'll install the communication device, so you can get in touch should anything happen to Hayato."
"Thank you, Hero Nanashi."
"Un, later then."

It seems Hayato has a good affinity with this demon lord, Hayato and his companions probably won't let their guard down, so they should be able to subjugate it for sure.

If they still can't defeat the demon lord after the auction after the kingdom conference is over, I'll go help their demon lord search under the pretext of experimenting new magic.

I put the antenna that improves reception of the communication magic device on the roof of Echigoya with [Magic Hand], and install the main part of the communication magic device in the bookshelves of Tifaliza's office.
There's not enough power to keep it operating all day, so I've put an ultra-compact magic furnace powered with a Philosopher's Stone behind the main part.

Tifaliza who's raised her face away from the documents asks me with an unreadable transparent expression.

"Kuro-sama, what is that device?"
"Ah, I'll explain it now. This device is--"

I explain to Tifaliza that it's a magic device for getting in contact with Hero Hayato, and instruct her not to tell it to anyone besides the manager.

I lock the transmission function, and make it so that it can only receive.

"If any communication comes from the other side, push number three on the magic tool for emergency use that I've given you."
"Certainly."

The magic tool for emergency use [Signal Rod] is a tool for transmitting short distance signal by making use of Signal magic.

The transmission distance is short unlike the large-type model that I've installed in the labyrinth mansion.

On top of being unable to reach me when I'm not in the Royal Capital, the signal probably won't reach the underground and the forbidden library.

Echigoya mansion has the large-type model like the one in the labyrinth mansion, but recharging it will be troublesome once you use it, so I instruct them to use the phone-sized [Signal Rod] normally.

◇

The next morning, I went to attend breakfast invitation by Duke Oyugock, but for some reason, the location wasn't in the duke's mansion, but in a dining hall in a corner of the royal castle.
I have a bad feeling about this, so I check the duke's current position on the map.

--Just as I thought.

After a short while, a castle's attendant informed me that the duke would be arriving, so I waited near the door to welcome him.

"Sorry for making you waiting, Sir Pendragon."
"No, I have just arrived too."

Is this a conversation between lovers! So I wanted to retort, but I turn my awareness to the person behind the duke.

"So you're Sir Pendragon, really young."

I fall down to my knees in accordance to the etiquette for meeting a king.
I just met the king as Nanashi last night, so it feels strange meeting him normally as a king.

That reminds me, the duke also said [young] when we first met.

The chamberlains who entered after the king put a white box on top of the table and left.
The people left in this room are only me, the king and the duke.

"Open that box."

I follow the king's order, open the box and take out the [Fake Holy Sword Claiomh Solais].
I inactivate [Poker Face] skill and put out a normal shocked expression.

"T-this is, perhaps--"

He probably doesn't think that me and Nanashi are the same person, but since he's bringing this, that means...

"Sir Pendragon, don't you want to use this holy sword?"

Toward the king's words that I've anticipated, I reply after a short pause.

"Th-this sword, to me..... No, it's a sword that is way over me."

I make a regretting expression and shake my head.
There's probably no one that can see through it as a fake if I use it indeed, but I'll end up automatically getting entered into Shiga Eight Swords for sure.

"It is presumptuous of me, but I am sure that Heim-sama or Bauen-sama of Shiga Eight Swords can perfectly wield this holy sword's power."

The king shifts his gaze toward the duke after my reply.

"How boring, a reply that's just as you've predicted huh."
"Youths these days lack ambition, but it should be appropriate in this matter."
"Umu, even Nina and Leon recommended him after all."

Leon, it's Baron Muno's first name isn't it.
Good grief, I wish they told me ahead of time if they schemed something.

When the breakfast starts, the talk finally touches the [This matter].

"Does Shiga Eight Swords not sound fascinating to you?"
"No, that is not the case--"

I can't exactly answer yes to that question.

"Nina said that your purpose is sightseeing around the world is it?"
"Yes, the world is vast after all."

Unlike the earth, there are a lot of unknown places, and there's no [Coogle Map] or Road View which could make you feel like you've explored the world.

Above all, thanks to being level 311, I can have a safe trip.

The king and the duke nod seriously after staring at me dazzlingly somehow.

"I've understood that you do not wish to become a Shiga Eight Sword. I will tell them to take you off the candidate list."

I don't really understand, but since it seems I've escaped from troublesome things, I'm glad.
He asks an even stranger question in the end.

"Did you enjoy the air travel from the labyrinth city?"
"Yes, it was a bit stormy and dramatic, but I was able to enjoy various scenery that wasn't possible from the ground."

The king seems to be satisfied with my answer, he nods deeply and permit me to leave.
In the end, they never said anything about [this matter], and only said, "Enjoy the kingdom conference" that made me anxious.

Judging from the flow of the conversation, it doesn't seem to be anything bad, I guess I'll wait until the kingdom conference....
If it's something that doesn't bode well with me, I guess I can make use of Satou's personal connections or Nanashi's influence.

By the way, the breakfast menu were fluffy bread rolls, half-cooked sunny-side-up fried eggs, fresh salad, and a thick grilled bacon. There wasn't any soup, but there were some fresh juice from citrus-type fruits.

Every dish was superb even though they looked plain like they were from some hotel. As expected of the king's chefs.
I'll reproduce them and let everyone have them when I get back.

◇

After the breakfast, I heard from Echigoya that the smuggling knight had died from poisoning in the jail.

Still, I can't grasp the purpose of the people who cause these series of events.
If they're trying to overturn the kingdom, they're doing a poor job, if they're doing terror, the places they're aiming for are incomprehensible.

In the prison, at the water fountain, in the downtown, and in the noble street.
I wonder if there's something I've overlooked....

Part 18 - Tea Party's Intruder

Satou's here. It seems uninvited guest exist no matter what world. It'd be okay if there were a way to indirectly tell them to leave like the joke story from Edo era, Kyoto's Bubuzuke though.

◇

"Welcome Chevalier Pendragon-sama."

I shift my gaze from the wyvern riders formation flying in the sky to an elderly gentleman who has come to greet me.

Here is the mansion of the noble who invited me to a tea party.
The noble is a friend of Marchioness Ashinen, her house has been a distinguished Earl house since the founding of the nation it seems.

With a house this distinguished, even the employees should look down on an upstart honorary chevalier like me, but at the very least, this elderly gentleman doesn't seem to be like that at all.

I let the servants to carry the sweets and gifts for the countess.

I'm in debt with her for gathering information about the nobles who are interested with orbs in the auction, so I've brought some stylish handmade accessory made from fur from labyrinth and labyrinth spider thread that's prized in the Royal Capital.

I used the big brand Nifati from the former world as the reference for the accessory, and its price went up from 3 gold coins to ten times that, adjusted due to Arisa's opinion.
Of course I used one among many names I had as the maker.

The elderly gentleman guides me out of the main building toward the tea party venue in the garden.

There are a level 35 male knight leader and 12 upper level 20s female knights guarding the venue.
Everyone is equipped with shiny ornamental-use armors.
The male knight is a handsome man, and together with the beautiful female knights, they look more suitable to be on a stage rather than in a training hall.

There are many tables put in the venue, and there are around thirty noblewomen enjoying the tea party. There are some noblemen too, but they're few.

It's a bigger gathering than I thought.

"Welcome, Sir Pendragon. I've heard from Retel already, but you really are young."
"Please allow me to take part in your invitation--"

After exchanging the standard greeting, I'm guided by the Countess to my chair in the tea party.
She calls Marchioness Ashinen by her name since they're close friends.

By looking at the women in their forties gathered on this table who are all wearing expensive-looking accessories and clothes, I understand that they are all wives of upper ranking nobles.

"Everyone, this year Retel cannot come due to her obligation as a viceroy, but instead, her friend has come in her place."

I give my name with the Countess's introduction, and as a gift for being acquainted with them, I distribute small boxes for them that I've brought separately from the one for the Countess.
Of course, the presents are inferior by one grade compared to the Countess's.

"Oh my, are these presents for us? You're tactful as expected of Retel's favorite aren't you."
"Ara ara, my my, how wonderful."
"What is this gem I wonder? The redness is deeper than ruby, is this perhaps a fragment of Blood Bead?"

I affirm the Viscountess who saw through it so while looking like I'm surprised.

It was one of materials True Ancestor Ban had given me, but Blood Bead has little use compared to Blood Sphere, so I've made them into earring-shaped magic tools that have an effect of preserving healthy body.
According to the referral document, it seems to also have the effect of easing stiff shoulders for women.

--Huh?
The presented items' market prices are increasing.

They were only 10 gold coins worth when I made it in the Labyrinth City, but the prices rise whenever the wives show each other's earring with different design, right now its price has become different by one digit.

Come to think of it, the price of the accessories that I gave to the Ashinen Couple had also strangely risen.
Their values have become too high as presents for a tea party, but let's overlook it as being the first time.

"As one expects of a Mithril Explorer doesn't it. Even in our salon, these kind of items can only be seen when someone asks for an engagement you know?
"As a bumpkin I am, I seem to have overstretched myself."

I honestly apologized for my youthful error toward the Countess who showed her concern about me bringing presents that didn't fit the TPO.

Thanks to that failure and support from the sweets (castellas), the tea party continues without problem, and I've successfully blended myself in the idle talk.

"--My, you have sharp ears. You already knew about the duchy rebellion didn't you."

I didn't know about it as Satou, but even I'm surprised with the Countess who knows the thing that has just happened yesterday despite not having any relation with the military.
You really can't make light of women's information network.

"Speaking of Duke Bishtal, there's this story too--"

The women's talk flies around so it's hard to follow it though.
Summarizing the long talk of the women, it seems the mother of the princess whom I met in the Forbidden Library back then is the daughter of Duke Bishtal.
I went to the Forbidden Library again after meeting the king last night, but I didn't meet the princess. She probably doesn't stay in the Forbidden Library every day.

"Kyaa, amazing desuwa!"
"Ufufufu, it moves cutely kashira."

Young noblewomen several tables away leak out shrill screams.
When I look there, a gem-like snake and a snake covered in long white fur are moving funnily while matching the snake charmer's flute, entertaining the girls.

It's probably an entertainer called for entertainment.
I've seen it before at the water fountain, but the snake charmer who's called here seems more competent, what's with the snakes I've never seen before and all.

"How vulgar."

The wives who are on the same table as me knit their eyebrows toward the girls who leak out loud voices.
The Countess changes the topic toward me in order to change that mood.

"Is this the first time you see a snake charmer Satou-sama?"
"Yes, it's splendid."

The Countess's aim goes well, the other wives forget the girls and ride on the topic.

"I think Marquis Kelten began inviting foreign entertainers since last year?"
"That's right. It was rare for that person to have any interest to anything other than military, even the salon talked about it a lot."

Come to think of it, during the fiend drug incident, Sir Sokel also testified that, "He holds tremendous influence in the military" didn't he.

"Now that you mention it, speaking of Marquis Kelten, last month was surprising."
"To think that the patriotic Marquis Kelten was suspected of treason...."

"I wonder if it was the scheme of Duke Oyugock who wanted to own the military after all?"
"My, you can't do that. Saying such things for a speculation--"

Hmmm, so he's known as patriotic huh.

"He gave a rare songbird to the princess as a present back then didn't he?"
"Yeah, he said that since he had troubled Duke Bishtal, he gave a present to the Duke's beloved grandchild."

Duke Bishtal's grandchild, they mean that Forbidden Library princess huh?
That girl seems like she'll like a rare book more than a rare bird.

When I asked it to the women engrossed in rumor, "Is it the princess who loves books?", they said not that one.
According to them, it seems to be for that Forbidden Library's biological little sister.

"It was a kingfisher-like bird."
"I wonder if it was sent from Yowok Kingdom, where the younger brother of Marquis Kelten was invited as the prince consort?"

Yowok, I feel like I've heard it somewhere.
--Where was it?

"That's not right. It seems to be a rare kind of bird that only exist in the eastern part of the continent."
"My, I wonder if he obtained it from the Weasel Kingdom."

An impertinent intruder came in the middle of such trivial talks.

◇

A red luminous point is reflected on the radar.
It's been rowdy in the town ever since I came to the Royal Capital. This city is more dangerous than the Labyrinth City.

With a roar, a monster with red rope-like pattern appeared while smashing through a pond in the corner of venue.
It looks like a giant toad. For some reason, its tail is like a tadpole's.

--It's strange.

I pass the voluminous wife who's screaming and hugging me to a nearby servant, and stand up.

The knights who quickly rushed in are hit with the giant toad monster's spitted [Acid Breath], the female knights are falling to the ground with scald wounds.

--The luminous point appeared as if it had been teleported in.

The giant toad's hand is going to strike a girl who's sitting nearby.
The guard captain bravely volunteered his body to rescue the girl as I was going to.

--I tried searching the underground tunnel, but no one is there.

Looks like he couldn't save her completely, both of them were thrown to the edge of the garden.

--How did it appear?

I postpone my doubt for later, and take the female knight's sword that's been fallen to the ground to help.
I catch a female knight that's been thrown from the tail's attack and put her down.
Catching a beauty really isn't nice when she wears metal armor.

"I'll earn some time until Captain-san comes."

I call out so, and casually walk toward the toad.
Its huge eyes rotates like chameleon's, and then the toad's elongated tongue attacks.

I avert the tongue's orbit horizontally with the steel sword.
The sword that blocked the tongue is gouged, probably because I can't clad it with magic power.

"Looks like there's acid on its tongue too. Shield bearers shouldn't block it, ward it off instead."
""""YES""""

I order the female knights who are awfully obedient to take out spears or axes if they have them, and concentrate in parrying the toad's attacks.
I'd likely defeat it in single blow if I'm careless, so I concentrate to hold back as much as possible.

"All members, retreat! The tail is coming!"
""""OUU""""

The female knights evade the toad's tail with my instruction.
There's a lone girl who twisted her legs during the retreat and fell to the ground in unladylike manner, but I act as if I didn't see it.

The sword broke when I blocked the tongue for the fourth time. What a fragile sword.

"Chevalier-sama, please take this."
"Ah, thanks.

I cut half of the tongue with the two-handed axe I've received.
The gushing blood changes before it touches the ground, it changes the lawn color like acid.

--Damn you fantasy creature.

I take a short spear to replace the axe and then use it to stitch the tongue on the ground.

"You've done well to preserve here! Chevalier-dono, I thank you for your cooperation."

I let the guard captain who finally participate to take the credit, while I'm putting effort to distract the toad from injuring the female knights.

Thanks to that, we were finally able to defeat the toad even though it took time without any dead toll.
For some reason, sometimes after the battle started, the toad's state became [Weakened], and the magic defense that protected the toad's body disappeared.

I told this information to the guards who had came after hearing the disturbance.

◇

As expected, the tea party had to be closed, but I was thanked by the nobles who participated, and the noble daughters whom I didn't have any chance to talk to during the tea party invited me to dance with them in the dance.
Most of the noble daughters here were of viscount and higher, so I probably could only do it with several of the baron's and baronet's daughters, but as a lip service, I replied, "It is my honor to."

When I'm in the carriage returning from the tea party, I catch a sight of a red rope-like pattern monster's body in another place.
The children are innocently throwing stones at the body, but most people's eyes look worried.
When you don't know where they will appear, common people would surely be frightened indeed--

I see, I forgot that point of view.

I see, fear huh.

The purpose of the unseen mastermind might be to plant fear in the people of the Royal Capital.

What if another demon lord's uproar happens again.

What if hordes of monsters attack.

I wonder if there will be more casualties than the time with the Dog-head demon lord if the Royal Capital's people are dominated with fear.

However, yet I don't know what comes after that.

If they just want to kill people, there's no meaning in doing such roundabout and mysterious

ways like this.
[Who] and [What for] are they planting fear in the Royal Capital's people I wonder.

--What is the last piece.

Part 19 - The Gathering of Shiga Eight Swords

Satou's here. It's quiet before a big incident happen. And I feel that often the situation has become unrepairable once you've noticed it.

Still, I think it's rare for it to really become unrepairable as long as you don't give up.

◇

After returning from the tea party, I heard about Lady Karina's condition from Arisa.
It seems Arisa's blasting worked, and she's going to attend the dance party while still ghastly.

"What did you say to her?"
"Fufuhn, you want to hear? But, I won't tell yo~u. It's a girl's s-e-c-r-e-t."

After waving her finger, 'chichichi', in front of her face, Arisa winks.
Her attitude is slightly irritating, but since it's thanks to Arisa that Lady Karina would attend the dance party, I'll forgive her by just pulling her cheeks.

"Leave the dance to me~?"
"Pochi also wants Master to look at the result of Pochi's special training nodesu."
"Nn, dance."

The youth trope are asking me to be their dance partner with sparkling faces, but I can't do that right now.

"I'm really sorry, I have to go with Liza now."

I feel slightly guilty from seeing the dejected children, but since tomorrow I'll be free until evening, I promise to accompany them as much as they like.
Since Arisa said some unnecessary remark, "That sounds like a line from a father who won't keep his promise", this time for sure, I'm pulling her cheeks as a punishment.

I'm going to keep my promise. Absolutely!

"--Master, the preparation is complete."
"Un, clothes like those also suit you well."

I praise Liza who's unusually wearing a skirt, and escort her like a lady to the carriage going to Julberg-shi's mansion.

◇

"What the hell kind a warrior doesn't have their own weapon!"

In the meeting place at the top floor of Julberg-shi's mansion the servant had guided us to,

an unfamiliar middle-aged swordsman suddenly chastised me.

--Who is this person?

"Excuse me. Nice to meet you for the first time. I'm Satou Pendragon, a retainer of Baron Muno."
"Hmph, it's impossible for an upstart worthless noble like you to become a Shiga Eight Sword, keep that in mind!"

No no, I'm aware that you're angry, but at least do the greeting.
I look at the man who's raging by himself once again.

He's a rather high level warrior at level 42. His age is also 42 matching the level, but it's probably a coincidence.
I think he's also a candidate of Shiga Eight Sword, but his affiliation is with Parion Temple, his place of origin is also written as Parion Holy Kingdom.
Apparently he's recommended by the temple, and not a holy knight or a Mithril explorer.

Matching that, his title is also [Temple Knight].... But the titles seen even just on the AR are dangerous ones like [Murderer], [Assassin].
He certainly has this somewhat edgy feeling that matches those titles.

Matching those titles, his magic sword also has [Energy Drain] and [Strength Drain] effects.
I'm slightly cautious about him due to his exceedingly suspicious origin and information, but he doesn't seem to be someone related to the demon lord believers [Light of Liberty].

Liza who's standing beside me seemed like she wanted to complain while I was checking those information, but help comes before she could snap.

"Jizon-dono, stop being impolite to the guests I've invited."
"Hmph, you were beaten by something like a demi-human cause you're saying such things."

The one who interceded is the host, Julberg-shi.
However, this middle-aged man called Juzon changed his aim from me to Julberg-shi, and provoked him.

--He's like a mad dog.

He's forties already, I wish he's a bit more composed.
I wonder if the word, 'fuwaku'[1], does not exist in this world.

"Are you mocking me, brat."

There's anger on Julberg-shi's words.
It seems most of the people here are hot-blooded, far from stopping the two, they look excited waiting for what'll happen next.

--These damn muscle brains.

Now then, since the mood has become threatening, I'll follow up.

If these two fight, we won't get to feast on the Oumi beef, spare me from that. The chef of this house is famous as the best in term of meat dishes in the Royal Capital, so I don't want to miss this chance.
I'll up my skill further here and treat our girls too.

"Fuhn, if you're a warrior, sooner than words--"

Using Ground Shrink, I approach the middle-aged man who's going to pull his swords together with his words, and hold down the pommel of the sword with the open palm of my hand.
These two were looking at each other, so my Ground Shrink shouldn't have been found out. They probably will interpret it as Flickering Movement or something along the line.

The middle-aged man still tries to pull the sword without minding me, but I suppress it with the overwhelming STR difference.

"This is a place for having pleasant chat you know. We can have the side show after the meal okay?"

The middle-aged man desperately tries to pull the sword, exerting his strength until his face is flushed, but the sword's pommel is unmoving.

"....That's a good idea--"

The middle-aged man looks like he's given up trying to pull the sword and then relaxes himself.
Even though Crisis Perception doesn't kick in, I stop the middle-aged man who's trying to pull a short sword behind his body by stopping his other elbow.
That's obvious indeed.

"--Have I passed the exam with this?"

I ask while smiling at the middle-aged man who's groaning gununu.

Even though I've dropped the [exam] thing as a joke with much effort, the middle-aged man kicks at my foot. There's a hidden knife on the tip of his shoe.

I kinda expected it since I often dealt against surprise attacks from monsters I had seen for the first time, I trample the middle-aged man's toes to the ground, preventing the attack.
I held back, but I felt dull sensation from the sole of my foot. The bones of his instep might have cracked.

"An explorer's body is a weapon as you see. Have you understood?"

While relaxing the power on the place where I trample his foot, I smile at him.
Of course, with the help of [Poker Face] skill, I make it so my emotion isn't reflected on my

eyes.

"Hmph, I withdraw what I said earlier. I'll have you fight with me after the dinner."
"That sounds fun."

I did not make a promise.
After the dinner, I'll leave the other candidates or Julberg-shi to be this battle maniac's partner and leave.

◇

There was a slight trouble, but this much shouldn't be enough to call off the dinner.
I'm glad that Julberg-shi is someone with a big heart.

Looks like we're the last ones who arrive at the meeting place.
In the meeting place, there are five Shiga Eight Swords, and the candidates: three holy knights, Jeril the Mithril explorer, and lastly, the middle-aged man earlier.

For some reason everyone is armed.
I tried confirming to Julberg-shi if we were really going to have a dinner, but there's no mistake about it. I'm relieved that it's not a battle tournament or something.
I'm afraid that this will become a tournament for Shiga Eight Swords selection.

We sit on our seats for the dinner, everyone besides us wears armor, subtly inviting some funny laughs.
Really, it'd have been dangerous if I didn't have [Poker Face] skill.

In addition, thanks to Julberg-shi's consideration, he made the middle-aged man from earlier sit far away from us.

I thought that there would be Hors D'oeuvre first, but the meat dishes enters the dinner from the start.
It seems each part will be cooked and taken out in turns.

"It's delicious. I feel it's a bit too soft, but this rich flavor tastes somewhat different from other meat."

Liza speaks her impression with clear voice.
I'm aware of the presence of her tail behind the chair that's swinging happily.

"Even more than the meat, this sauce is superb. Julberg-shi employs some good chef."

Jeril who's sitting in front of us expresses his impression to Sir Julberg the host.

On the other hand, other members only say "tasty", and concentrate eating the dish in silent.
Half of the people here are noble born, yet, the taste of the beef from royal farm is probably special.

I also enjoy the Oumi beef menu delightfully.
The grilling calculation is exquisite, but analyzing the pre-cooking sauce is difficult. I can't understand one of the ingredient used to bring up the subtle flavor no matter what. It's quite a difficult problem.

However, my Crisis Perception kicks in as if pouring cold water on this wonderful dinner.
I thought it was from the middle-aged man, but unexpectedly, it comes from diagonally upward. This room is on the top floor, so I wonder if it's from the rooftop?

At the same time with that, some luminous points that are quickly approaching here are reflected on the radar.
Looking at the movement speed, they're going to arrive in about 10 seconds. Judging from their trajectories and speed, they must be flying.

I choose the luminous points and open the information window.

The ones approaching are five flying monsters. All of them are Tamed monsters, but the people riding on them have the affiliation [Light of Liberty].

Judging from their movement and the Crisis Perception, this mansion seems to be the aim.
Their method is a bit forceful, but I wonder if they're coming to erase Shiga Eight Swords and the candidates who are obstacles for their plan?
Or perhaps, since [Light of Liberty]'s base of operation is in Parion Holy Kingdom, they have some grudges against the middle-aged man from earlier, and so we're getting involved in it.
He seems to be the type that makes many enemies after all.

Putting that aside, the monsters coming here are upper level 20s, so even if there are five of them, it'll be over in an instant with the people here.

--Five seconds until they come.

"Something is coming!"

Before I could speak, Heim-shi of Shiga Eight Swords spoke urgently.
He probably has Crisis Perception skill too.

Hearing the warning, the warriors pick their own arms.
Liza who doesn't have a weapon holds the silver knife she was using in the dinner earlier and stands up.

However, what are the anti-air defense of Royal Capital doing.
I wonder if it can only function to stop monsters that are trying to break through the outer wall?

--Estimated time of arrival, 0 seconds.

Huh? They're not coming?
When I chase the movement of the luminous points reflected on the radar, they pass

through this mansion and make a turn in the sky.

Hyuru hyuru, so the sounds of cutting wind--

Damn, bombing huh.
I never would've thought that there would be aerial bombing in a fantasy world.

"Liza, upward. Magic Edge Cannon, maximum."
"Understood."

Liza moves without delay from my order.

--Perhaps it's due to the rush of adrenaline, I see the surrounding in slow motion.

Julberg-shi and katana-user Bauen-shi who take their weapons on their hands and be vigilant toward the things beyond the roof.
Heim-shi who gave the warning earlier, and the scythe-user Ms Ryouna are currently kicking the door, going to the balcony.
The old holy knight who went to the Duchy Capital with the third prince is attaching a shield on his arm.

As expected of Shiga Eight Swords, they're quick to act.
It seems the three holy knights still can't follow the situation, they're currently surveying the surrounding while standing up.

On the other hand, Jeril the explorer who's used with emergency situations is calmly eating some magic medicines. Those medicines have acceleration and physical reinforcement effects. They're expensive medicines, but your life is more important really.

And the last one, the middle-aged man looks strange.
He has drawn his sword, but for some reason his line of sights wander around the inside of the room.

His behavior is like there's an assassin who's aiming for him inside the room.

That thought stops with the sounds of collisions between heavy things beyond the roof.
Liza shoots the red light spheres on her hand almost at the same time the rock balls thrown by the tamed monsters destroy the roof.
The magic edge cannon smash the rock balls together with the roof.
The convergence was slightly worse due to her using a silver knife, but the magic edge cannon scatters red light, illuminating the room red.

--Thus, the long long night of the attack on the year-end Royal Capital begins.

1. Can mean 'past forty', or 'following the right course'.

Part 20 - A Long Royal Capital Night

Satou's here. I heard that mass weapons are strong, but I wonder why I heard that catapults are weak. If it just throws at least head-sized rocks, I think it would be quite dangerous.

◇

Dropping from the roof, jet of dust and splinters from the rock balls destroyed by Liza's magic edge cannon fly about to the room that's filled with the red afterglow.
Slightly later, debris from the destroyed roof also fall.

From the side, I quickly snatch maids who are about to be crushed by the debris, saving them.
The surrounding view was obstructed by the dust so I had used Ground Shrink freely.

Two holy knights seem to be injured by the collapsing debris and the rock balls, their health gauges have been reduced by half.
On the other hand, a sommelier-like male waiter escaped by himself with difficulty. Men have to be like that after all.

Then, heavy vibrations that shakes your abdomen intermittently assail.

Surprised by the shaking foothold, the maids whom I've just rescued hug me from both sides.
I endure my cheeks not to melt with the help of [Poker Face], and open the map to check on the situation.

With the 3D map, I see that the mansion has begun collapsing.

There's no mistake, it's the fault of the four volleys of rock balls from just now.
Aside from one volley that Liza intercepted, this mansion was attacked by rock balls that are normally used for castle siege, so it's understandable.

I quickly check the positions of the servants inside the mansion.
Unexpectedly, there are only 23 of them in all. I invoke the usual [Magic Hands] to catch them and then put them outside the mansion.

Fortunately, there wasn't anyone who got directly hit by the rock ball and died.
There are several people who are in critical conditions, but I can just deal with them after we've escaped outside.

During the several seconds when I was desperately arranging the escape plan, an incident happened in the room.

"--Guh, wh, what are you doing."

I heard muffled scream from beyond the dust cloud.

Accoding to AR, Bauen-shi the katana-user is dying, and beside him, Julberg-shi has been injured to the point of half-dying too.

Next to them is the middle-aged man colored in red in the radar--Jizon the temple knight.

--The bombing earlier was in order to assist this guy's assassination huh.

Relying on the Radar, I kick the debris below toward him.
Jizon the temple knight raises a muffled scream with a heavy thud sound on the other side of the cloud.

The cloud of dust is cleared for an instant from the debris's track.
Jizon who was stabbing his magic sword on Julberg-shi's back pulled it and retreated back while looking annoyed.
The debris earlier seems to have broken one of his shoulder, his arm hangs listlessly.

"Tsk, unarmed bastard being a nuisance--『Wicked Magic Peerless』"

Jizon's magic sword that received the [Command Word] at the end of his cursing turns black.
And then, the blackness moves to his body from his hand, turning his whole body black.

--Well, no one would wait till it ends though.

In defiance of the floor that's begun collapsing, the great sword of Heim-shi the [Weed] and the scythe of Ms. Ryouna the [Mower] attack him from both side.

Jizon kicks Bauen-shi the katana-user toward Heim-shi, stopping his attack.
The scythe of Ms. Ryouna that comes next grazes his shoulder, but then the scythe flows upward as if slipping from his blackened body.
Jizon swings his largish magic sword toward Ms. Ryouna who's full of opening after missing a large attack, forcing her to retreat, and then he slips away from there.

The blackened Jizon who runs off in low posture like a cockroach heads toward me and Liza for some reason.
I might look like an easy target since I'm hugging two female servants on both sides like this.

Certainly, coping with him might be difficult for me who's concentrating on getting the servants out of the mansion.

--However, I have a reliable bodyguard on my side.

"Liza."
"Understood."

With a bastard sword-sized magic sword, the approaching Jizon stabs Liza who's standing in front of me.

Liza parries it with a silver knife covered in Magic Edge.

"Impossible, Magic Edge on a tableware?!"

Did he not see Liza intercepting the rock on the roof just now?
Certainly, Liza had used up most of her magic power with the attack just now, but I've already re-charged her with [Magic Power Transfer].

"Still have remaining magic power--『Assasin's Dagger』"

Receiving Jizon's [Command Word], the surface of his magic sword emits dark red light.

"Your flesh will fall off just by touching this『Rotting Poison』. Come at me if you think your scales can block this."

He probably said that to scare us, but it was a bad move.
Liza has completed her preparation during his unnecessary remark.

There's a red glowing spear on Liza's hand.

It's a spear knitted from Magic Edge with the silver knife as the core. It consumes large amount of magic power, so she normally doesn't use it, but its attack power rivals that of a normal magic spear.

Liza's red spear flicks Jizon's poisonous magic sword, and then gouges his arm.
Liza blocks the slight poison scattered by the magic sword with a red membrane produced on her body--[Magic Armor] that's deployed partly.

Jizon is still trying to attack even though his shoulder is pierced, but that never manifested.
Faster than Jizon swinging his sword, Liza's spear pierced Jizon's shoulders, and the wrist that held the sword, at a speed eyes couldn't track.

--Oh dear, she's merciless.

"A spear made from Magic Edge!"

Jizon who's been neutralized by Liza artlessly, collapses to the floor.
I saw Jizon taking out something behind his body.

Three black lumps the size of fists--magic bombs for suicide bombing!

Fortunately, I'm the only one who notice it.
The moment the activated magic bombs are separated from his hand, I touch them with [Magic Hands] that aren't being used to get the servants, and put them into my storage.
Jizon probably saw it as if the bombs suddenly disappeared.

Before Jizon could leak out surprised words, Liza attacked him by swinging her tail once, robbing the man's consciousness.

--Good grief, leave suicide bombs to robot in research lab.

During these chains of incidents, I've somehow successfully completed evacuating people in the building besides the ones in this room.
There's not much time until the mansion collapses, so we have to quickly get out of here too.

Of course, it seems I'm not the only one who think so.

"It's dangerous here, everyone escapes!"

In place of Julberg-shi who couldn't move due to the effect of the magic sword's [Energy Drain] and [Strength Drain], Heim-shi gave instructions to everyone.

Two floors of the mansion's have already been crushed, there's around 10 meters down to the ground from this fifth floor.
The people here should be able to escape from only that much height.

I lift the backs of the two female servants who are embracing me from both sides, and jump from the collapsed wall.
My ears hurt from the stereo screams.

While defending myself from the falling the mansion's debris with Flexible Shield, I'm going down to the ground with poor visibility due to the cloud of dust.
The foothold is bad due to the large amount of debris, so I'm actually secretly using Sky Drive near the ground to move, with the dust as the cover.

The men who ride the tamed monsters shoot bolts from crossbows toward us who are escaping.
It seems their aim is Jizon Liza is carrying on her shoulder.

Making use of the remaining cover, I use [Remote Stun] to alter the course of the bolts.

I had also shot at the eight tamed monsters' heads while I was at it, but it seemed they had countermeasures, the Remote Stuns were blocked by magic shields that appeared before the tamed monsters, not reaching the bodies.
The enemies who have lost the opportunity to attack fly over the mansion's sky.

--Maybe I shouldn't have restrained myself and attacked with 120 shots.

I make a landing while regretting it, and take some distance away as to not get squashed by the mansion.
I catch the holy knights who failed their landing and stopped moving with [Magic Hands] and forcefully hurl them away from the danger zone.
They might get hurt a bit, but it should be better than getting crushed to death.

"Please treat these two."
"Y-yes."

I entrust the two maids-san I've carried on my shoulders to the servants who've escaped earlier.
I thought the two had stopped screaming, turn out they're fainted.

Four of the enemies who failed their attack earlier come attacking again in order to get rid of Jizon.

However, the interceptions have already been prepared.

"....■■■■■■ Multiple Light Javelins"
""""....■■■■ Light Javelin""""

The light javelins invoked by Shiga Eight Swords members and Jeril assault the tamed monsters.
The dying tamed monsters plunge with their inertia, but the old knight with a great shield cuts in.

"<<Protect>> Holy Shield Plitwen"

The blue light that spread from around the shield block more than 1 ton bodies of the tamed monsters.

He had no presence up until now, but this old knight, Leiras is also one of Shiga Eight Swords.
I don't know his nature since we mostly didn't converse when he was in the Duchy Capital with the third prince, but it seems his defensive power is quite a thing as expected of someone who lives on after fighting the yellow-body demon.

The members of [Light of Liberty] who have got off the tamed monsters are trying to escape, but Ms. Ryouna and Heim-shi gleefully chase them.

◇

While glancing at it, I open the map and check the surrounding.

A monster appeared in the earl's tea party this noon, so there are three times the knights and soldiers who are patrolling than usual.
The knights and soldiers are masked, but they don't look to be in any tense situation like surrounding a specific mansion or something.

I thought that the [Light of Liberty]'s nobles hiding in the mansion would do something during the incident, but they're not moving in their own mansion that's being guarded by their private army that's more than 100 people strong.
Though, the mansions of other upper nobles also have their own varied situations, so there's no need to especially mention them.
I had also thought that the three elites of the [Light of Liberty] mentioned back then would come as an insurance for the Shiga Eight Swords' assassination, but they're not moving from their hiding mansion.

They're people who are bold enough to attack like this in the capital of the whole kingdom.
It should not be over with just this.
If the attack just now was a diversion, then is their true aim the royal castle?

I stare at the map once again in order to understand the people's movements.

Right at that time, I saw something moving in the corner of my view.

"Master, the patrolling knights have come."
"...Let them in."

A butler with dirtied formal dress reported to Julberg-shi.
With that much disturbance, the patrolling knights closest by would have come.

I see their details on the map.
The 12th knight order huh, the commanding knight is level 34. His level is high for a commander of a patrolling unit.

It's a unit with 30 knights, there are six people who use great shields unbecoming of a patrolling unit, 10 people equipped with long spears that have fire stones on their tips, four magicians, and other 10 knights.
Those are some excessive forces, like they're going to a war, but these equipments and number of knights are probably for dealing with giant monsters that appear frequently in the Royal Capital.

Liza who's standing by beside me becomes tense when she sees the man who's going here.

"What's the matter?"
"Master, please be cautious. That's the man who was the boss of Lost Thieves."

As pointed by Liza, I re-check him with AR readings.
The man's name is Rudaman--the guy who illegally manufactured Fiend Drugs in the underground Labyrinth.

However, after negotiating with the guildmaster when he was in the guild's jail after getting arrested by us, he should have become a member of [Crime Slave Unit (Violet)] in the Royal Capital.
What kind of connection that made him transfer to become a normal knight....

Looks like tonight's disturbance will still continue.

Part 21 - A Long Royal Capital Night (2)

Part 2

Satou's here. There are many quiet things the moment before a dammed up river that's about to produce flash flood exceeds it limit. However, in hindsight, I noticed that there were many omens.

◇

I get past Julberg-shi and step forward in front of the knight leader who has visited, the former lost thieves king, Rudaman.

"Heya, Rudaman. Did you change your job from crime slave?"
"--Tsk, Pendragon the『Woundless』huh. So you were a candidate of Shiga Eight Swords too.... No wonder I can't see any injured person in this catastrophe."

Even though I approached him sociably, Rudaman clicked his tongue with a warped face.
By the way, the reason why there's no one injured is because there were people who can use healing magic among the servants, and I distributed some magic potions.

Rudaman casually raises his hand above his head, and then swings it forward.

At the same time, every member of the 12th knight order begins to take battle actions.
Men who have great shields make a wall, the fire spears that peek among the gaps between them shoot out [Fire Bolts].
I can even hear spell-chanting behind them.

Rudaman lowered his posture and then tried to run past me, but I trip his leg, making him fall.
However, Rudaman skillfully does forward roll and swings his axe toward the empty-handed Julberg-shi.
Julberg-shi is taking an evasive action to evade the axe, but it seems there's still some lingering effect of the magic sword, his movements is way duller than usual.

However, the frenzied edge never reaches him.

Liza breaks in while holding a red magic edge spear.
I nimbly throw the debris below my feet toward the [Fire Bolts] that come flying, grasping them by only reading the movement on the radar.

Looking at the trajectories of the fire bolts, looks like they're aiming for Jizon to seal his mouth.
They're probably also trying to exterminate the holy knights who have unequipped their armors for healing, and the samurai-san of Shiga Eight Swords together.

"..... ■■■『Light Boost』"

Jeril who has used light magic for physical reinforcement rushes toward the rebels to deal with them.
He seemed to have seen Rudaman in the Labyrinth City too, he started to chant the spell in the report of when Liza arrested Rudaman.

Jeril jumps over the shield-users on the frontline, and tramples down the wand-users who have fire wands.
At the same time, the spell-chanting of the rebels on the back stopped too. Apparently, the two Shiga Eight Swords who were chasing after the tamed monsters attacked from behind them.

The two are high level warriors, they dispose the rebels who assumed to be the 12th knight order unit.

Of course, Rudaman whose limbs are pierced by Liza's magic edge spear has also been captured.
It seems holding back with the magic edge spear really is difficult for her, one of Rudaman's arm is about to torn off.

"Impossible, we were equal back then...."
"It is the result of Master's education and training."

Liza indifferently warded Rudaman who was saying so in vexation.

During that occasion, suspicious movements of some luminous points are reflected on the radar.
They're in the garden of the neighboring mansion bordering this mansion.

Apparently, there are five criminal guild people standing by. They were probably laying low in order to assassinate people during the chaos.
Looks like they've missed the opportunity to come out since the fight here ended too quick.
I'll leave other people to deal with these guys.
I look around, since Ms. Ryouna the [Mower] of Shiga Eight Swords looks bored, I decide to cast it onto her.

"Ryouna-sama, I'd like you to hear something--"

After telling her that I felt some suspicious presences on the border of the neighboring mansion, she quickly agreed to go investigate while smiling ferociously.

Looks like Julberg-shi and Heim-shi of Shiga Eight Swords are going to interrogate the captured rebels.
I'll leave that to them, I'll do the thing that only I can do.

I leave only the rebels who assumed to be the 12th knight order, and the people of [Light of Liberty] to be shown on the map, and check them.

Among the [Light of Liberty] people, the three high-leveled ones are hiding in the mansion

together in the noble mansion, but the people who are less than level 10s are acting together with the 12th knight order.

--No, they're not together.

I enlarge the map and see that the members of [Light of Liberty] are in the underground tunnel. All members of the 12th knight order are standing by on the entrance of the tunnel.
I tell the surrounding that I'm going for nature's call and go into the shadow of the garden, and look the members in turn with [Clairvoyance].

It seems the members are quickly moving toward an exit of the underground tunnel.
I check the direction they're going, but there's no particular magic tool facility or something.
The slimes are wriggling on top of the sewage, but they're not changing or anything.

When I turn my view forward the underground tunnel, I see a new corpse.
I tried searching for corpses in the tunnel and found many. Every corpse has been stabbed excessively with sharp things, and died with an anguished expression.
Attracted by the smell of the blood, slimes, insects, and rats have gathered, those are cruel scenes.

Every corpse is wearing shabby clothes like they're either people of the slum or slaves.
Their ages and genders are all over the place, there's no distinctive similarity between them.
It seems they were beaten beforehand, there are many with black bruises.

Right at then, a [Telephone] from Arisa comes.

"What's wrong, did something happen there too?"
『T-there too you said, did anything happen? Are you injured?』

I tell Arisa whom I've carelessly made worried to don't worry, and urge her to continue.

"The two of us are fine, leaving that aside, what's happened."
『There's a letter from Sera in the castle. The Chamberlain who brought it said『ASAP』, what do you want to do?』

--From Sera-san?

"Arisa, immediately open it and read it."
『Eh? Is it alright? Wait a minute. Okay, I'm reading it--"Nightmare visits the Royal Capital, Black Calamity alight from the heaven."』

This is why prophecies are....
Please make it easier to understand.

There shouldn't be a prophecy of a demon lord appearing in the Royal Capital, so I guess it's probably a greater demon or something along the line.
However, it's not from underground. It's from the sky huh.

--Please let the development be not like a troublesome inflation battle manga, like "This time the enemy is a God."

I could have fallen behind if I didn't hear the oracle. I have to thank Sera somehow after this matter is over.

It wasn't written that it would be today, but the sign seems quite dangerous. I don't want to make this become something that I'd regret later because I'm being too carefree.
We should be prepared enough so that we can cope with anything that might happen.

"Arisa, tell everyone to arm themselves. I don't know what's going to appear today, so use the best equipment."
『By best equipment, you mean you permit the use of hidden equipment?』
"Yeah, please. Be sure to equip masks or something to hide your identity okay."
『Okkey!』

Alright, now it should be fine as long as multiple demon lords don't attack.

◇

I tell Julberg-shi that I'm going back to the mansion to fetch my equipment and leave the place.
The maids I saved were thanking me with sparkling eyes, but it wasn't the time to ogle them, so I only greeted them back plainly and left.

After returning to the mansion, I changed into Kuro and headed to Echigoya to finish my business there.
Liza had gone to the room where everyone was to put on her equipment.

"Tifaliza, please get the command room in the top floor ready to use. Is the manager here?"
"Certainly. I think the manager is in her own office."

I take the manager and go to the underground vault.

"It should be fine with this much space."

I collect all the goods besides the ones for battle inside the underground vault into my Storage through Item Box.
I also gathered battle-use goods in one corner of the room.

"U-um, Kuro-sama, just what is?"
"In case of emergency, shelter the neighboring citizens in this underground vault. I'll entrust you with the right to command the golems in this room."

After saying that to the manager, I give her the [Command Rod] for giving order to the Orichalcum Golem.

This place should hold even against advanced magic, as long as it's only one volley.

◇

I change into Nanashi and teleport to the royal castle in order to report, though I think they knew already.
This time I'm not teleporting to the Forbidden Library, but to an arbor of the royal garden nearby the king's office.
The king has offered me to exclusively use this place for teleporting in.

I go to the king's office, and see the king and the prime minister having a meeting about something.

"Your Majesty, sorry for coming without warning, is it alright?"
"If it isn't Nanashi-sama."

So he already knows. It's good since the talk advances fast though.
The prime minister who's standing beside the king gets the other civil officials to withdraw.

"Is it by any chance, about the incident at Julberg-shi's mansion?"
"Heya, Prime Minister. There's that matter too, but I have another info--"

I tell them that the 12th knight order is acting together with the demon lord believers, [Light of Liberty], and the ones who attacked Julberg-shi's mansion from the sky are [Light of Liberty]'s members.
Since it seems that the captured tamers killed themselves before they could be interrogated, the prime minister is surprised when he hears this info.

Furthermore, I tell them that the [Light of Liberty]'s members were killing the poor in the Royal Capita's underground tunnel, they were possibly doing some kind of ritual.

"As expected of Nanashi-sama. We also have something we wish to tell you--"

The thing Prime Minister said was largely the same as Sera's oracle.
It wasn't only from Sera, many temples in the Royal Capital reported something similar too it seems.

However, a slightly different prophecy came from just Parion temple's elder miko; "The calamity exists under the sakura tree."
Fumu, by under the sakura tree it means the royal castle's one I guess?

"Then, if the Royal Capital is attacked by greater demons or a giant monster that can't be handled by the royal army, please announce to the people to quickly protect themselves by taking shelter or the like okay. I'll defeat it as quick as possible so there will be no victim. There might be casualties if they carelessly got themselves involved."
"At your will. Prime Minister, how much is the remaining magic power of the『City Core』."
"The declining mana supply from Source has been getting better for the past several days, so, leaving aside the wide area ritual magic, there should be no problem if it's only for the Royal Capital's protection."

After I told so to the king, he confirmed some information to the prime minister.

...Or rather, what's [City Core]?
Is it something like [Dungeon Core]?

Well, I guess I can ask that later.

"Then, please act in a way that would keep victims from appearing okay."

I tell them so and leave the royal castle.

◇

Even though it's not even 30 minutes after the attack on Julberg-shi's mansion, three monsters with red rope-like patterns like from before have appeared in the Royal Capital.
The difference is that every monster is weak at only level 10-20s.
Due to that, the patrolling knights exterminate them efficiently.

After getting back to my mansion, I change my tone to Kuro and tell [Porina] in the workshop with [Telephone] magic to evacuate to the underground shelter.

"Yes, I understand. What should I do with the workshop's facilities?"
"Leave the facilities. Evacuate the workshop's workers together with their family to the shelter. If there's still room in the shelter, I don't mind if Porina accepts the neighboring people too by your judgment."

I forgot to contact Nell, but Porina would probably tell her.
Aoi boy and Prof. Rotation are in Echigoya's laboratory together, so they probably would evacuate with the other employees.

Continuing on, I also contact the orcs underground with [Telephone] magic.
This time I've changed my tone to Nanashi. Switching it during emergency is annoying.

"Ri Fuu, demons might come attacking Royal Capital. Evacuate to a safe place if there's one. If the teleport gate is usable, that one is better."
『Don't be unreasonable. It takes three days for the teleport gate to activate.』

So teleport gates have that kind of restriction.

『Moreover, there's no place safer than where we are now y'know. Otherwise, we couldn't have brought up the children.』
"Then can you put barricade on the entrance to the village? For about three days at the longest."
『Okay. We can't refuse Nanashi. Is there anything we can help?』

I look at the map, and check the places where the sacrifice-like corpses are located.
There are two places like that nearby Ri Fuu. I guess I'll ask them to help me.

"--Can I?"
『Leave it to us. There's a Heraruon priest too, so we can perform purification ritual.』

I thanked the reliable Ri Fuu and cut the telephone.
When the incident has been settled, I'll treat him to some liquor and dishes.

◇

Right when I cut the call--

Some odd discomforting sense welled up from below my feet.

"Nyu!"

Tama who feels the same odd sense raises her tails up, and run up my body.
It's ticklishly painful when you're wearing armor like this, so please stop it.

"Something feels icky nodesu."
"Satou."

It seems Pochi and Mia feel the odd sense too.
I quickly open the map.

Red luminous points appear one after another in the Royal Capital.
Looking at their statuses, every one of them is probably the red rope-pattern monster.

"Look! Outside the window!"
"Master, a magic circle-like thing has appeared in the sky, so I report."

Arisa and Nana report, I look out the window.
A gigantic magic circle that covers the whole Royal Capital has appeared.

Apparently, the incident has gone into full swing.

--I guess I'll become Nanashi and go crush it quickly.

Part 22 - Royal Capital Chaos

Author's note:

※It's in third person view this time.

In the chaos of the year-end Royal Capital that's like pandemonium hell.

"Dammit, my steel sword got chipped."
"Tsk, my spear too."

The unfortunate soldiers who've encountered one of the monsters in the Royal Capital are having a hard fight.
They're the first people who got in contact with the elephant-sized cricket monster that broke through the stone pavements.
Even though they're more heavily armed than usual, the burden is too heavy for soldiers who usually fight against criminals, the tide of battle is in favor of the monster.

However, their saviors come when they've been cornered.
A group of around 30 people from the other end of the street engage the monster.

"We've come to assist you! Leave the monster to us."
"Oh! Knight-sama, thank you very much."

The knight captain is holding a mithril alloy lance on one hand which he thrusts to the monster's face.
Red membrane that appeared from the monster's body stopped that attack, but it didn't chip the lance like it did to the soldiers' swords.
After a brief clash, the red membrane cracks like a glass.
However the lance that's been resisted by the red membrane glides through the monster's head, missing its target.

"So this is red rope."

The knight rides the force and runs past through the monster.
The remaining knights began to charge following their captain.

However, the monster isn't simply waiting around to be defeated.
The monster who was fighting with its forelegs and antennas before, began to ram the knights with its body.
Like an arrow shot from its bow, the monster sends the knights flying.

Half of the knights were sent flying, and several fell from their horses, but protected by their bulky armors and tempered muscles, no one dies.

In the bloodied views of the fallen knights, a town girl stands before the monster.

"Nuoo, you monster! Your opponent is me, you damn toilet insect!"

A knight mustered his strength to stand up, and threw provoking words toward the monster at the limit of his soul.
The monster turns its attention from the town girl who's right in front of it toward the knight.

"Good kid, you really are a boy. I'll lend a hand so rest for a bit now."

The town girl tells so as if she's explaining things to a kid, and spins the broom on her hand.
Apparently the town girl intends to fight the monster.

The monster's antennas are attacking like whips, but the town girl skillfully parry to the right and left.
The monster attacks again with its forelegs but the town girl nimbly jumps, avoiding them.

"R-run. It's not an opponent that can be fought with a broom."
"It's al~right, leave it to~ me."

There's a recognition inhibition veil like a traveling noble would wear on the face of the town girl who's sending a v sign toward the knight.
The town girl hits the monster's head from below with the tip of the broom on her hand.
As if stroke by a hammer swung by a giant, the monster's head bends backward vigorously.

"Wha, impossible."

Words to escape from reality leaked from the mouth of the knight who saw an unreal scene like it was from a comedy show such as hero stories.

The town girl strikes continuously for three times more to the monster's chin.
The monster crashes to a house on the side of the road, the building turns into debris and dust cloud.

"Achaa, wonder if someone will demand compensation for this."

While the town girl is worrying such an out-of-place thing, the knights have begun to raise their bodies one after another, setting up their weapons toward the monster.
They have wounds all over their bodies, but their knights' honor won't allow them to let women and children fight.

"The knights of Shiga Kingdom are in good health even when the era has changed huh."

The town girl crosses her arms and nods proudly.
Even while being buried under the debris, the monster's antennas attack the knights skilfully.
Sparks come flying every time the knights block the antennas with their swords and shields.

"Yo~sh, here's a present from Onee-san! I rarely do this kind of service okay."

When the town girl waves her hand with the broom, the knights' swords are wrapped in light.
If there were someone with Appraisal skill, they would see that it was the advanced force magic spell, [Divine Blade].

The knight captain receives the attacking antennas of the monster that's under the debris.
The antenna was flicked and sparks would fly just before, but now, the antenna is cut the moment the sword touches it.

"I can't believe it!"

After seeing that, another knight stabs the monster's body with a lance.
The lance easily pierces through the monster's body like a tofu.

"Mito, what are you playing at. Our enemy has appeared y'know."
"Ah, Ten-chan[1]. If it's enemy, it's skewered over there see?"

A woman with long silver hair and wise gaze gets down from the roof to beside the town girl.
Her face is hidden with recognition inhibition veil like the town girl, but all the knights in this place are convinced that the face hidden behind the veil is beautiful.

"...Look at that."

The silver haired points at the sky with her shirauo-like[W] finger.

Lured by that, people who look at the sky see the magic circle that's spread in the sky of the Royal Capital.

"Uwah, that's dangerous."
"The floating violet hair over there is probably the mastermind behind this disturbance. Let's get rid of it quickly."

The silver-haired woman points at the center of the magic circle, but the knights aren't seeing anyone there.
However, it seems the town girl called Mito is able to see it.

"Floating in the air huh. I guess it's really a demon lord candidate?"
"Dunno, we'll know if it's a friend or foe if we just fight. If it's a demon or a demon lord, simply destroy it."

The silver haired woman who said some dangerous words holds a brusque great sword with one hand, and then jumped to the roof from the road, going away.

"W-wait a minute~"

The town girl puts her broom on her armpit, holds the hem of her long skirts with both hands and chases after the woman.

◇

"Your Majesty, tonight the monsters are reported to appear on more than seven locations."

The Prime Minister tells the report from the messenger.
Considering the most was two monsters up until now, it's probably okay to deem this abnormal.

"Is that so...."

After a rock-like silent elapses for a moment, the king declares his decision.

"Generals, notify every knight order to prepare for sortie. Put them in stand by without exception, do not let them sortie in a hurry because of their desire for meritorious deeds."
"""At your will."""

The generals send messengers to the transmission towers.
The transmission towers are used to contact the knight garrison outside the outer wall by using light magic.

"Leader of Royal Court Magicians, let Shiga 33 Wands to search for enemies in the whole Royal Capital. See that they know it comes from me, and to every transmission towers, without exception."
"At your will. ...However, as I understand, our duty as Shiga 33 Wands is to be the greatest weapon of the kingdom. His Majesty--"

In a serious tone, the king interrupts the royal court magician leader who's protesting.

"Leader of Royal Court Magicians, this is a royal order."
"....We will undertake the royal order."

The royal court magician falls prostrate with an unpleasant face, he looks to be the very picture of someone who's going to disobey.
The prime minister who has sharply seen through it, follows up.

"Leader of Royal Court Magicians, the enemy befitting of your role as the weapon has yet to appear. The one that lurks behind this matter is most likely--"

The prime minister is leading Royal Court Magician Leader who's holding his breath, and then he continues with a clear face.

"A greater demon, or perhaps...."

Royal Court Magician Leader lifts his head and mutters as if he's delirious.

"I will carry out Your Majesty's order with utmost importance!"

Royal Court Magician Leader raises the national treasure handed down by the Ancient King [Holy Wand Ophalian] overhead and then leaves gallantly.
He never notices the cold gazes from the surrounding.

When the messenger reports the 10th appearance of the monster, the king stands up from his throne.

"Prime Minister, I'm going to use『Communique Space』to order the citizens to evacuate."
"At your will."

The prime minister orders the chamberlains and the maids to start activating the [Communique Space] made by Ancient King Yamato, and the preparation for the king's ritual.

◇

『My dear people--』

The figure of the king is projected in the royal capital's air, overlapping the eerie magic circle. His voice comes from every transmission towers in the royal capital.
As far as the royal capital's people can remember, this function has never been used except for new year congratulatory and coronation ceremonies.

『Demons, to our Royal Capital--』

However, there are only a few people who look up at the figure of the king projected in the sky.
The people of the royal capital are desperately running away from the monsters that appeared on every place in the royal capital right before this broadcast.
It seems the king's broadcast for evacuating is slightly too late....

◇

"Oy, how many are alive?"
"Dunno, any potion left? Can't feel my left hand since awhile ago."
"Used all those things up already."

The half-killed knights behind the debris are exchanging words without vigor. The arm of the knight with pale face is seriously injured to the point like it'll torn off.
Their shields are broken, their swords' blades are too chipped, they're no difference than blunt weapons.

Five pill bug monsters on the other side of the street are swinging their antennas around, looking for the knights.

"I'll take at least one of them with me--"
"Don't be impatient. Raiss, aren't you marrying your childhood friend next week?"
"Yeah, I'd like to look at her face at least one more time..."

The knight stopped talking halfway.
A different pill bug has appeared from the opposite side of a collapsed house.

"Tsk."

The knights hold their dull swords and stand.
However as if ridiculing their determinations, the same kind of monsters roll from behind that pill bug toward them, one after another.

"You're kidding me...."
"Hah, come at me."

The rock-like monsters roll toward the bluffing knight--

However, before they could reach the knights, the monsters are struck by invisible hammers from overhead accompanied with roaring sound.
Red membranes appeared on the monsters' surface for an moment, but they were blown away in a flash, and then concentric circle-shaped cracks appeared on their hard shells.
Strong wind from the after-effect of that shock waves pushed the wall near the knights.

It seems the impacts reached deep inside the monsters, every monster has fallen and rolled sideway, they don't seem like they'll get up.

"Uwoo"
"W-was that『Air Hammer』just now?"
"....No, it should be a higher class of magic. Rather than that, let's escape during this chance."
"Sorry but run away by yourself, don't think I can get up."
"Shut up, I'll carry you on my shoulder."

The user of this magic doesn't seem concerned with the hot friendship of these knights either.
Next, transparent [Javelins]-like magic come flying toward a monster--it seems the aim is to finish it, the magic hits on the center of the crack on the shell made by the shock waves earlier.

While making 'Zofuri' sound, the transparent javelin slips through the monster body.
The next moment, muffled plosive sound echoes from inside the monster's body, then its body swells like the internal pressures pushing outside for an instant, and then red light leaks out from the gaps of the monster's shell.

And then, such inhumanly accurate attack befalls on every monster in this place.
The monsters are reduced to corpses with just that one attack, joining the objects such as debris in that place.

"....In just two strikes?!"
"Just, what the heck's this?"

A speck that flew from one of the monsters body together with the red light falls to the floor where one of the knight's forehead lays.
The knight picks that up, it's a red stone that's like a fragment of a magic core.

The knights never know--

The first magic was a non-lethal elementary force magic called [Remote Stun].

And the second magic was an elementary force magic, [Remote Arrow].

Above all, the second strike sniped the magic cores that were inside the monsters, rupturing the magic cores from the inside by overloading it.

--The knights never know.

There are things better left unknown in this world for the peace of your mind.

◇

"Oy, we've witnessed a miracle and all. Let's live on until we can thank the magician who saved us."
"....You're right."

The knight encouraged his co-worker as brightly as possible, but his partner knight's face has gone past pale, the darkish color of the death are floating on it.
Right at then, someone sprinkles cold water.

"What are you doing!"

What the knight, who reflexively shouted at such a miscreant conduct, sees is a small knight who's wearing golden armor under its pink mantle.
It doesn't seem to understand why the knight is exasperated, the golden knight who sits while holding its small knees inclines its head in puzzlement.
The knight who was going to catch the golden knight is stopped by his partner knight who was dying just now.
And that's with the arm that was going to be torn off just now.

"Calm down.... It was a magic potion."

The golden knight peers at the knight who's sitting on the ground from below.

"Your hand alright?"
"Thank you. It's really an amazing medicine."
"You can have this~?"

The golden knight hands a small bag with three magic medicines inside.

"Is it alright?"
"Supply support~?"

The golden knight nodded to the questioning knight.

"I am indebted."
"Don't worry be happy~?"

The golden knight looks restless for a bit, and then it disappears only to appear on the other side of the street.
Apparently, the golden knight is doing the same thing over there.
Pink mantles and bandannas become popular items as good luck charm among the soldiers and the knights who were saved by the golden knight's medicines at this day.

◇

"Has the hell's lid been opened?"
"What do we do Yasaku. That one's dangerous. My body is tingling all over."
"Yeah, according to Rin Jou-chan who saw it ahead of time, it's『Floor Master』class."

Some explorers are peeking from behind the remain of a wall toward the big frame of the giant tree-like monster that has turned a section of the city into debris during the little time since it appeared. There are citizens they're protecting behind them.

"Can we win if the Mithril explorers gather here?"
"Baro, you know that it's impossible."

A man with stubble shook his head toward his witch companion's words.

"All the people who were present when those guys defeated the『Floor Master』aren't all here. Even the preparation is far off. Besides--"

He cuts his words and points at the two same-class monsters that have appeared. A pink dango-like monster, and a silver monster with a human body, six arms, and a crocodile head. There are also several small bipedal monsters around them.

"Oh--N--o--"

The big-breasted explorer who's wearing priestess uniform points her bishop wand to one of the monsters that have appeared with a carefree voice like it's not a grave situation.

"That's--a deemon--,moreover--at the very least--a middle clas demon--. The ones--around it--seem to be--lesser demons too."
"Demons huh, leaving aside the small fry lesser ones, the middle class is bad news."

One of the explorers, a magic warrior with handsome face raises his eyebrows looking at the demon.
He can says that the lesser demons are small fry since his level is high, they're formidable enemies for normal army.

"It looks strong nanodesu!"

"Don't be careless so I advise."
"Let's go you two."

When the explorers look at the out-of-place voices, three people wrapped in golden armors are standing before the big monster that's been classified as [Floor Master] class.
One of them has small build, either a dwarf or a child.

"When did they...."

Featherkin children wearing masks suddenly appear in the air in front of the muttering explorers.

"Please evacuate before it's too late, we will guide you."
"Lead~"

The featherkin children with silver armors called the explorers.
They've decided to trust the words of these beckoning children and leave the place.

Behind them--

There are the figures of the golden knights who fell the giant tree monster like felling a decayed tree, while leaving blue tracks of light.

The knight who chantlessly uses advanced magic like the hero, the spear knight who freely uses the concealed secret art (hi-ougi) of the Shiga Eight Swords' Chief, [Magic Edge Cannon], in rapid fire to restraint it, and the small knight who uses a great sword with blue light assaulting the giant tree and making big holes on it while moving erratically.
They escape from the peril while looking with sidelong glances at the unreal anomalous knight like it's a daydream tale.

On later days a rumor has begun circulating, 'aren't the real identities of the golden knights who saved the royal capital the Pendragon Seven Braves headed by the lizardkin spear user who smashed the shiga eight sword...'

The king announces the identities of the golden knights during the new-year congratulatory broadcast.
Their true identities are--

Author's note:
It's Satou's point of view in the next chapter.

●Profiles
【Mito】A woman who appeared on Zena's intermissions. Fought against a lesser dragon, and won.
【Ten-chan】A person who appeared only in name on Zena's intermissions. It seems she lives at Fujisan Mountains.
【Yasaku】An unfortunate explorer who's linked by fate with greater demons one way or another.

【Shiga 33 Wands】Royal Court Magician people.
【Golden Armors】Identities unknown. There are witnesses who saw it in Labyrinth City.

1. *Ten* can mean heaven.

Part 23 - The Royal Capital's Magic Circle

Satou's here. The sakuramochis eaten during flower viewing are extraordinary. And it's perfect if there are hot teas.

However, it seems there's a sakuramochi that would make you hesitate to reach your hand on it in the other world....

◇

"Arisa! Please activate『Tactic Talk』magic."
"Okayy!"

Arisa activates the Tactic Talk magic chantlessly.
Without waiting for her, I flew toward the magic circle with Sky Drive.

I don't know what's coming out today, so I'm wearing the same golden orichalcum armor like Nana's. I can equip it together with the silver mask, but since its clattering sound is noisy, I've taken it off.

"I'm going to destroy that magic circle, I'd like to ask everyone to eliminate the monsters in the royal capital."

Through [Tactic Talk], everyone replies to my request unanimously.
While listening them, I observe the monsters in the royal capital with the map that occupies half of my view.

--There are many that need to be defeated.

I'll purge all the small fish myself.
Using ranged magic or Laser would damage the underground tunnel and the buildings.

I guess I really should use pinpoint-attack magic here.

I was going to use force magic [Remote Arrow], but stopped.
I've seen those red rope pattern monsters blocked Liza's spear, even though it was only for an instant. It's probably better to crush that protective membrane first.

I star invoking [Remote Stun].
I check the lock-on marks that appear one after another on the map, and fire the [Remote Stun] simultaneously.
Next, I fire [Remote Arrow] the same way.
The plan seems to be going well, around 100 luminous points of the red rope pattern monsters have disappeared.

When I'm about 10 seconds away from reaching the magic circle, most of the small fish on the streets have been eliminated after repeating the same set 20 times.
I've also split Claiomh Solais to 13 parts and made it to diligently eliminate the monsters.

However, I can't defeat the monsters that are located indoor with the same method.

Moreover, the monsters keep appearing in the royal capital, their number is added whenever it's decreased.
I really have to cut off the ringleader to stop the chaos.

I talk to Arisa with [Tactic Talk].

"Arisa, look at the map in the command room. From the northwest upper left, the length and width are divided by 10 right?"
『Wait a minute.』

While waiting for Arisa's reply, I begin to decipher the magic circle's constitution.
Evilish magic circles often have traps that are triggered by their destruction, so I can't abruptly break it with brute force.

『Yes, I can see it.』
"Put A to J on the horizontal axis, and 0 to 9 on the vertical axis."

I can hear the sound of Arisa doing her best with a pen from the other side.

『....OK, it's done.』
"Then dispatch Tama to point D3. Large swarms of lizard-type monsters are invading the noble mansion. I'm counting on you Tama."
『Aye aye Sir~』

I continue analyzing the magic circle as I hear Tama's casual reply on my ears.

"This time it's B1. A giant monster has appeared. The knights are fighting it, but the battle area would expand if left alone, and the orphanage would--"
『Arisa, the transfer. Master, the permission.』
"I authorize it."

I let Nana whose flat voice is oozing with impatience to dispatch to the downtown.

--Alright, analyze complete.

Apparently, it's forcefully absorbing magic power from the Royal Capital's Source and then it releases it to the royal capital.
Its function is simple despite its large scale.

I invoke [Break Magic], destroying the magic circle.
The magic circle is broken while leaving white glass-like splinters.

However, it's a gigantic magic circle that covers the whole capital.
I've merely destroyed a part of it. It's been broken several hundred meters wide due to chain reaction, but it seems the magic circle has repair function, it has begun repairing the broken part.

--How troublesome.

I could've destroyed it in one go if I had the advanced magic [<<Chain Break Magic>>] and [Neutralize Magic].

◇

I instruct our girls to dispatch while I'm cleaning up the small fish myself.
Thanks to the hard work of everyone, although there are some injured people, there is no casualty.

In order to quickly settle this chaos even a little bit faster, I try to destroy the magic circle once again.

This time I try invoking both [Mana Drain] and [Break Magic] together.
Just as I've thought, when I break its structure while draining its mana, the magic circle's repair function won't work.

Next I just have to go around breaking the magic circle with all my might.
If there's no hindrance, I can do it faster than making a cup ramen--

--As if that thought was a flag, my Crisis Perception kicked in.
I evade the white light that comes attacking from the ground with Flash Drive.

Despite the speed of Flash Drive, the white light reached one Flexible Shield, smashing it.
The Flexible Shield that could even stand the beastkin girls certain-kill technique was destroyed in an instant.

I feel like I've seen that white light before.
It looks exactly the same as the Dragon Breath that the Black Dragon Heiron used.

I block another troublesome white light with two Flexible Shields.
It seems like I could somehow block it with one Flexible Shield if I just work out the angle right to avert the white light.
I was able to pinpoint the one who fired the white light from the luminous point that appeared on the map because the opponent shot the second one.
The distance is around 400 meters. I approach the ground at high speed.

Surprisingly enough, the opponent's level is only 30 even though it used white light with that much power.
The name is [Ten-chan]. It's like the name of a shady Chinese that appeared in an old manga.
The gender is female, her race is [Homonculus] like Nana. Her title is [Familiar].

It seems she uses a recognition inhibition item, the info from Appraisal and AR readings differ with each other.

And then the one who appeared from behind the debris is a silver-haired beautiful woman with bat-like wings on her back.
Half of her face is covered by a black veil, but there's no mistake that she's beauty.
She's holding a great sword with white blade on her hand.

"I know not whether you're a demon or a demon lord, but you're the mastermind behind the royal capital chaos right. Get torn by my Dragon Claw Sword and disappear."
"You misunderst--"

I block the great sword, that attacked before I could finish talking, with Durandal taken out of my Storage.
She seems to be someone who's just mistaking me as a demon, so I evade with Flash Drive, and attempt to talk to her without doing the usual fainting-palm strike combo.
I'd like her to help eliminating the small fish monsters if possible.

We exchange two-three blows of swords while moving in the sky like gliding. Shining sparks that appear between blue trails are coloring the Royal Capital's sky.
Apparently, the silver-haired beauty is insensitive.
It seems she's still mistaking me as a demon even though I'm clearly using a holy sword.

"Ten-cha~n, wait for me~"

A black haired woman who's jumping around on the streets and the rooftops is coming toward us.
The thing on her hand looks like a broom, I wonder what kind of joke is this.

--Am I imagining things, I feel like I've heard her voice somewhere before.

"Mito! This guy is powerful. He hasn't hatched yet, but it's only a matter of time before he becomes a demon lord. Get rid of him with Forbidden Magic while I keep him busy."
"Eh~, how many victims would appear if I use Forbidden Magic in the middle of Royal Capital."
"You're too naive! Did you forget how many orcs were sacrificed due to that naivety?"
"Uuu, you promised not to mention that."

Since they seem to be busy about something, I order Arisa the next dispatch location.
Claiomh Solais seems to be working hard, but the monsters are appearing too quick. I'd like for our girls to go around defeating the small fish too, but if Arisa uses too much space magic to teleport them, she would drink too much magic potion and fall.
The rear guards, that are Arisa and the others are equipped with Divine Dresses that have Philosopher's Stones attached for recovering magic power, but nevertheless, it can't catch up with the consumption of the space magic that uses too much magic power.

It seems their private talk is over, the woman called Mito uses [Cube] magic to create footholds and ascends to before me.

"You there! You'll become a Demon Lord if you use your unique skills too much you know. So--"

--I recognize her finger pointing pose.

"....Hikaru?"
"He?"

I approach the person called Mito who reacted to my mutter with Flash Drive, and brandish Durandal.
Ten-chan tried to cover Mito from the side, but I drive her away with [Remote Stun] barrage.

I stare at Mito who screamed 'Kya' while covering her breasts with her both hands.
The thing that I cut was only the Recognition Inhibition veil that covered her face. I wouldn't cut it along with the clothes like some eroge villain.

The face that appears is the same as Nanashi's.
It's exactly the same face as the person whom Nanashi is modeled after--No, it has aged a bit huh.

After looking at her stat shown on the AR, I'm convinced and so I talk to her.

"Ancient King Yamato--"
"Wha"
"--Receive it."

I pass the Claiomh Solais that's just got back to the shocked Mito--Ancient King Yamato.
Of course, it was after I had taken my magic power from Claiomh Solais so that it would be easier for her to re-contract it.

"Claiomh Solais?! Why?"
"I'll talk about it after we've defeated the enemy."

I say so to Mito and then glare below.
It's the direction where my Crisis Perception, that has been gradually getting stronger since a while ago, is reacting.

Three demons appeared from the collapsing noble mansion where I'm looking at. One of it has intimidating air that's clearly different from the rest. It's probably a greater demon.

Contrary to its intimidating air, the pink sakuramochi-like round demon is shaking.
While overlooking it, I talk to Mito who's concentrating in pouring her magic power into Claiomh Solais.

"Ancient King Yamato, between canceling a magic circle and fighting a greater demon, which one you're good at."
"U~n, I don't have both the Holy Wand, and the Holy Shell Motion Armor, so my fighting power is only at half."

Then there's no need to consider it.
I don't know how much the legend about Ancient King Yamato is true, but I can probably believe that she's a master of force magic. I'll have you show me the power of level 89.

"Then please cancel the magic circle. I tried many times, but I couldn't destroy it with intermediate magic."
"Hoi, leave it to me."
"Mito! Are you going to obey this suspicious person?"
"Un. I mean, Ten-chan and I wouldn't be alive now if this person had just felt like it you know?"

Perhaps, she could see my hidden level like Yuika?
I guess it's as one would expect from the maker of Yamato Stone.

The sakuramochi-like thing is rising while wriggling.
If this were a manga, this type of enemy is powerful and can usually nullify physical attack, and reflect attacks, but I wonder how it is in real world.

I'd like to ask it the reason why it did such roundabout things, but we don't have any room to prioritize my curiosity now.
Sorry but, I'll instantly kill it with the technique that was used to clean-up the whales--

---

Part 24 - Sakura-colored Greater Demon

Satou's here. Diverse boss enemies appear in home console RPGs. I enjoyed them without getting tired during my game day, but I think doing a no-miss clear without a strategy guide is just a burden.

◇

"Stop! Even among the oldest greater demons that guy specializes in defense. Even forbidden magic will only damage it a little. Advanced magic casted chantlessly will be nothing more than a distraction to it."

Ten-chan the silver-haired beauty stands on my way and rattles on when she saw me invoking [Condense].
I have to redo my aim now even though I had a good one just now.
....I'll forcefully remove her if she obstructs me again.

Communicating with [Tactic Talk], I instruct Arisa the plan for anti-greater demon measure.
At the same time, I receive the report about Liza and the others who exterminated a big-tree type monster that had appeared a short while before the greater demon.

While re-commencing my attack, I'm going to see how capable its magic defense is.
I invoke the [Implosion] magic that doesn't need a line of fire toward the sakuramochi-like greater demon.

Countless explosions appear as if wrapping the sakuramochi demon's all at once.
The explosive blaze and shock wave rush toward the inside, but the after-effect sweeps over to the surrounding.

"Wha--"

Ten-chan is surprised and turns around toward the sound of explosions behind her.
Immediately after, she got rolled up in the shock wave from the [Implosion], and got sent flying somewhere. It should be quiet for a while now.

Buildings and garden trees around the area of impact have been flown away by the blast.
This [Implosion] magic gives the least collateral damage to the surrounding area among the intermediate magics that I can use, yet I probably shouldn't use it in the middle of a city again.

--Hm?

Three pink-colored feeler-like things pop out from the other side of the explosion blaze.

It seems the magic earlier didn't manage to eliminate the sakuramochi demon.
Apparently, the information that Ten-chan said, [The guy that specializes in defense], is correct.

While evading the attacking feelers, I cut them with the holy sword Durandal.
They were cut easily without any problem despite its defend-specialist thing.

I burn the cut feelers that have been separated from the main body with [Furnace Flame (Forge)].
If the separated body parts of a greater demon are left alone, they will change into lesser demons, and it'll be bothersome if they revive back into its original state, so it's important to clean them up.

The sakuramochi demon shows itself while the smoke from the explosion is fading.
Polyhedron-shaped transparent defensive membrane of force magic is covering the sakuramochi demon's surrounding.
It seems to have been badly damaged, it's full of holes, and I see that it's crumbling down and disappearing.
Moreover, the AR reading tells me that the main body has sustained around 10% damage.

"--What, it's working well isn't it."

Apparently, it doesn't seem to be a perfect defense.
Its defense is probably around the same level as the demon lord I fought in the Duchy Capital's underground.

『Attacking before giving your name, the hero these days is a coward poyo.』

--Poyo?
Have you guys run out of the material for the ending word, greater demons!

While mocking it in my mind, I listen to Arisa who reports that the preparation is complete, using [Tactic Talk].
I tell her to wait for orders for now, and I confront the sakuramochi demon.

"After launching a surprise attack on the royal capital and putting it into state of chaos, you're calling me a coward, what a laugh."
『What are you saying poyo. We demons are evil poyo. Evil is coward, unfair, terrible, and cruel, such things are decided poyo. Our emperor has decided so poyo."

...Poyopoyo, noisy.

All the greater demons I had met so far had heads for chanting, but it seems the pink lump body of this sakuramochi demon is its head.
Even while talking with me, I could hear the chanting roar from the lump, and then the protective membrane re-appears around the sakuramochi demon.

"Fuhn, you're fighting back huh--"

Oh right, let's get the truth of the matter out of this guy.
It might talk fluently if it's a template evil.

"--What are you plotting in this Royal Capital? Are you manifesting a demon lord?"
『Poyo? Violet hair poyo? An egg who imitates a hero poyo. Looks like you could hatch as the real one if we get the fake king help hatching you poyo.』

...Wait, what is this guy saying?

'Egg' is probably a jargon for calling a reincarnated person.
It probably misunderstood me as a reincarnated person when it saw my violet hair wig hanging out of my golden armor's helmet.
And, if the jargon for turning reincarnated people into demon lords is 'hatch', then....

『It was worth responding to the demon lord believer humans' summon poyo. As long as there's the mana collected from the Royal Capital's Source in the Chalice, hatching you is easy poyo. There are also a lot of wave of negative emotions used to convert the collected mana in the Chalice into Miasma, it's difficult for this to fail poyo.』

So they turn Royal Capital into chaos in order to mass-produce the so-called miasma in it huh.
I couldn't think of their objective, but it's natural when the chaos itself is the objective.
I have to remember to tell the king the whole story later.

『Now come, I'll show you the technique of an expert that has turned many poyo.』
"--Fuhn, I don't have any intention of turning into demon lord or something."

Of course I don't want Arisa to turn into one either.

『Everyone said the same thing at first poyo. But, when they fought with all their power, they exceeded their limit, and hatched into one poyo.』

I see, so it's not like it has a technique that turn them into demon lords, but the defense specialist sakuramochi demon made use of its trait to make them overuse their unique skills, turning them into demon lords.

Then there's no need to hesitate.
There's this chance and all, so I'll let it be the guinea pig for my experimental prototype.

"--Lulu, shoot."

I give an order to Lulu who's arrived on the sniping point as I've instructed with [Tactic Talk].
I've had Tama to be her guard just in case there's a surprise attack.

Blue light bullet hits the sakuramochi's protective membrane like a laser, creating blue sparks.
It didn't reach the sakuramochi demon, but its protective membrane that had just been restored broke like a glass.

It's a new armor-piercing round that's also called Holy Bullet I've created luxuriously using adamantite and [Blue Liquid].

I thought of using adamantite for its hardness, but it didn't seem all that different with the mithril-made magic bullet that was used on the floormaster when it was against magic defensive barrier.

『You make your friends attack poyo? You're really a cowardly egg poyo.』

The sakuramochi demon shakes its body and disparages me.

『Its power was something considering it destroyed the defensive barrier that could defend against the hero's holy sword poyo, but it seems even the certain-kill blow was useless poyo.』

Sakuramochi demon muttered so and began laughing.
This laughter seems to be spell chant, its protective membrane is restored, moreover, twofold threefold of it are wrapping the sakuramochi demon.

--However.

『Aim Bullet, hit!』

Lulu's refreshing voice reaches my ears through the [Tactic Talk].

『Floating Fortresses linkage』
『Yes, my Lady. Floating Fortresses, Link Connection.』
『Gun Turret aim.』
『Aye aye Ma'am. Phalanx System, target in sight.』
『Fire!』
『IT'S, SHOW TIME!』

....I want to hit myself who recorded that voice in high spirit.
Let's avoid recording things after having a drinking bout from now on.

No one responds to such conflicts in my mind, an enormous magic power is coming from the direction where Lulu is.
I saw the sakuramochi demon who noticed it turned around in a hurry, but it's too late.

A flare bomb-like red light bullet bursts open the protective membrane.
Next, red and blue bullets come flying and hit it one after another, before long, they rain incessantly like a squall.

Every time one of the light bullets hits, the protective membrane is smashed like a glass, and before long, the projectiles have begun to impact the sakuramochi's body.

The protective membrane is smashed.

The demon's body is gouged.

Its granular chanting organ is pulverized.

Every time the sakuramochi demon is hit, its body quivers.
Each of every shoot packs the same amount of power that pierced the floormaster.
The sakuramochi demon is being tossed around left and right like a sandbag getting hit by a boxer's barrage.

In a flash, the sakuramochi demon is gouged like a decayed tooth, its body pieces are scattered to the surrounding.
While observing it, I incinerate its body pieces in the air with [Furnace Flame (Forge)], disposing them.

Yet, it's really a defend-specialist type, it has enough leeway to scream poyopoyo.

--That leeway ends now.

『Plasma Cannon, standby...』

The continuous fire from before was just an opening act for breaking its defense.

『Main Armament Fire!』

A plasma sphere big enough to swallow a tower blasts the sakuramochi demon.

"Arisa!"
『Okayy! Leave processing the blast to me!』

A barrier wall created by Arisa guides the enormous heat, from the plasma blasting the sakuramochi demon, to the sky.
The slight heat that escaped made several dozens of the mansions behind the sakuramochi demon to disappear, but please overlook it since there's no human damage.
The king probably would compensate it.

A red flame pillar burns the royal capital's sky.
Inside of Arisa's barrier wall, overwhelming heat changes the ground into glass form, hollowing it into earthenware mortar shape.

The figure of the sakuramochi demon is no more there.
It's a disappointing end for a greater demon.

The flame is temporary extinguished on the other side of the barrier wall since the oxygen has disappeared, but after the explosion has gone to the sky, fresh air fills it and small conflagrations occur in various places once again.

I see Mia creating a water giant on a far away reservoir at the corner of my view.

『Situation end--』

I interrupt Lulu's report, and Call Tama's attention, who's guarding Lulu.

"--Tama!"

『Dangeris~?』

I see the water tower where Lulu is, falls down.
Of course, the two are safe. I see the two landing on the nearby building's roof.

--I'm glad that Tama was there.

It seems one of the two demons that appeared together with the sakuramochi demon attacked Lulu.
The other one seems to be disturbing Mito, I see it fighting against automatically moving Claiomh Solais and Ten-chan.

『I've collected Lulu and Tama.』
"Roger."

Report from Arisa who used teleport magic came.

I invoke [Laser] magic and quickly round slice the two demons, eliminating them.
Adjusting it so that Ten-chan wouldn't be carelessly burned was a bit bothersome.

I want to burn the remains of the sliced demons, but they're too far away.
I'd like to use Flash Drive to do the clean up, but I can't afford to leave this place.

Because--

"Why don't you stop pretending to be death right around now."
『You did well to notice poyo. Normally you'd be off guard, and then it'd end when I shot you from behind poyo.』

As if rising to the surface of the air, the translucent sakuramochi demon materializes.

....Apparently, its 'defend-specialist type' isn't just for show.

Part 25 - Sakura-colored Greater Demon (2)

Satou's here. Enemies in games that can't be defeated unless you follow the required steps were popular once. Maybe because their bad reputation from the feeling of absurdity, it gradually got off the mainstream, nowadays enemies that could be defeated "quickly" by following the required steps seemed to become popular.

◇

『Now then, what are you going to do poyo? Normal attacks don't work on me poyo. Resign and attack me using your unique skills poyo.』

--Fumu. Unique skills huh

By using the light magic [Illusion], I create images that resemble the violet special effect like when Arisa uses her unique skill.

『Looks like you've finally felt like it poyone.』
"S-stop! Do you want to become a demon lord!"

While guarding Mito who's continuing to cast the forbidden magic spell in order to destroy the magic circle, Ten-chan screams in fluster.
--Chanting?
So she still needs to chant to use the forbidden magic even though she's a hero...

I strike the demon with [Condense] and [Laser] magic combo.
Unlike the time with the whales, I don't have the bad taste to make the sakuramochi demon into ingredient, so I freely operate the laser to turn it into small pieces and then burn it with [Furnace Flame (Forge)].

I showed the effect earlier so that the demon would not evade this attack.
It was an insurance since it'd be annoying if it used a magic like reflection.

The sakuramochi demon was defeated soon after it screamed poyo, but it seems this really won't end so easily, the demon is reviving with translucent body like earlier.

"You violet hair! Don't use advanced magic, use forbidden one!"
『Only that degree is useless poyo. Magic power is overflowing today so I can revive as many as I want--』

Without waiting for it to finish talking, I repeat the same magic combo from before.
Ten-chan is throwing me advices in jumble, but I can't do the impossible.
Good grief, if I had known that it would turn out like this, I would have made Arisa and Mia get to be able to use forbidden magic from the forbidden library.

『Kyokyokyokyo, I'll revive no matter how many times--』

At the same time the sakuramochi demon is revived, I strike it with the same combo again.

"Wha--"

I could hear voice of surprise from Ten-chan's direction, but I don't have time to mind it so I ignore her.

The attack just now passed through the demon that had just appeared.
It's like the invincibility time when your characters revive in retro games, the demon can't be damaged even though its body can be seen during the moment when it's reviving.

It was saying something about magic power earlier, so I tried defeating it by using [Mana Drain] on the surrounding area, and tried using [Break Magic] when it was reviving and when it was about to be killed, but there was no difference.
I tried repeating it for about 10 times, but the demon doesn't stop getting revived.

--If magic is no use, then I'll try using holy swords next.

I take a casted holy sword from my Storage, and put the collected magic power in Durandal to it, to the point where it's about to be overloaded.
Dazzling blue light begins to emit from the casted holy sword.
Of course, I've put on the show with the violet special effect like before.

『Hou? Dual wielding holy swords poyo?』

I move to below the sakuramochi demon with Flash Drive, strike it with full-power [Remote Stun], launching the demon several meters above.

While ignoring the grating poyopoyo sound, I get to the ground right below the sakuramochi demon with Ground Shrink and then throw the casted holy sword straight above.

--A dazzling flash lights the surrounding blue.

The thing that was a casted holy sword penetrates the sakuramochi demon, tears the magic circle 100 meters above, and disappears into the sky.
The sword was already crumbling when I threw it, so it probably has truly disappeared.

The sakuramochi demon that had been penetrated by the casted holy sword keeps its form for an instant, but in the next moment, it changes into several pink ring-shaped mist, after that, it disappears in the air along with an explosion.

I see Ten-chan's jaw dropping like it's going to fall on the edge of my view.
Her beauty look has been ruined.

◇

『That just now surprised me poyo. As expected of the egg given the god's power poyo.』

So it's really revived again huh--

One thing, that just now was my normal power. I didn't use any unique skill.

Ten-chan who was being dumbfounded until now pulls herself together after seeing the sakuramochi demon and vigorously recovers.

"It's useless no matter what you do! If you use such unreasonable power that much, you'll really turn into a demon lord y'know!"

I look above Ten-chan's voice, but Mito is still chanting the spell.
The forbidden magic takes too long...

--Huh?

If you need to chant to use a forbidden magic, then that means the Meteor Shower that can be used chantlessly is an advanced magic?
There are magics with higher power than that huh.... Truly forbidden magic, the world could break.

As a result of thinking such a needless thing, the sakuramochi demon attacks with its feelers. While fleeing to the sky, I cut the feelers with Durandal.

I cut all the advanced force magic attacks that the sakuramochi demon casted to rush after me. It's a magic for besieging a castle with its pillar-sized magic arrows.
Compared to other magic element, force magic doesn't have any magic that has wide-area effect, so there might have been no need for me to escape to the sky in fear of collateral damage.

"Crush the space around that guy if you want to defeat it! Otherwise, you'd only be exhausted."
『It is as that fly has said poyo. With this much overflowing magic power in this space, I can revive infinitely poyo.』

The sakuramochi demon replies to Ten-chan's shout by putting on airs like it has a leeway. However, there's a hint in what it just said.

I talk with [Tactic Talk].

"--Arisa, did you hear it just now?"
『Off course!』[1]

I feel my strength drained after hearing Arisa, but now isn't the time to make a retort.

"Come, Arisa."
『Okkay!』

Arisa who teleported comes beside me.

"You called I jump out, jan bara jan jan jan--"[2]

"Build a barrier first."
"Hoi sir!"

I stopped her stupid entrance line and made her act.

Arisa takes out a wand that's like it's made from emerald. It was a wand made from a branch of the world tree I collected in the void sky.
Arisa's magic encloses the sakuramochi demon in a cylinder-shaped barrier.

『This is.... Poyo?』

This isn't the time to mind the sakuramochi demon's surprise.
I replenish Arisa's magic power that has been used up with [Magic Power Transfer].

"I forbid the use of unique skill."
"Eh? But Arisa-chan's highlight..."
"Use normal space destruction."
"Hooi."

The moment Arisa's wand shines, the advanced space magic [Space Destruction (Smasher)] strikes the sakuramochi demon--

◇

--Return Teleport, urgent activation.

I reacted to the crisis perception instantly and took Arisa back to the mansion with teleport.

I didn't know the detail since it happened instantly, but I perceived that at the moment Arisa's [Space Destruction (Smasher)] destroyed the sakuramochi demon's defensive barrier, some kind of reflection skill or magic activated.
It's probably the sakuramochi demon's trump card for when it's about to be truly defeated.

--How troublesome.

"Wh-what did just happen?"
"It's probably magic reflection. We were almost done in by our own magic."

While doing Magic Power Transfer to Arisa, I told her my opinion.

A greater demon who was a close aid of the [Golden Wild Boar King] used the same thing too during our fight back then, so there's probably no mistake about it.
An advanced force magic [Magic Reflection] exists, so it's probably that.
It seems that it can't reflect higher-ranked magic, so I think my magic is fine, but the fact that Arisa's and Mia's magic can't get through it is painful.

『Master, we have completed evacuation of the inhabitants on the adjourning points where the greater demon appeared, so I report.』

『Completed~?』
『Here is completed too nanodesu.』

Alright, with this I can use attacks that are a little bit more powerful.
After thanking everyone, I tell them to withdraw and then I get back to the battlefield with Flash Drive.

During the slight time I was away, the sakuramochi demon has changed its target to Mito.
Several pink feelers are attacking Mito.

The automatically-moving Claiomh Solais and Ten-chan are barely preventing the feelers from reaching Mito.
It seems Claiomh Solais's attack power is weak when it's moving automatically, it's barely able to deflect the feelers.

I draw close with Flash Drive, clear away the feelers, and bear the full brunt of the sakuramochi demon's attacks.

◇

--Now then, let's use the next hand.

If I can't crush it together with the space, I'll prioritize cutting off its mana supply.
Mito's spell chanting isn't going to end for a while.

While defending from the sakuramochi demon's attacks above him, I open the map and search for the objective.

Even while doing that, I'm not forgetting to continuously fire [Remote Stun] and [Remote Arrow] to defeat the small fry appearing in the royal capital.

I finally discovered it 17 seconds later.
The objective's position is 300 meters below the place where the sakuramochi demon appeared, in a hollow cave-like place.
It seems several dozens of Light of Liberty members are there.

The thing I'm looking for is in the center of those guys.

--Holy Grail. Its state is [Chaos].

I thought of destroying it with [Condense] and [Laser] magic combo, but I got a hunch that the filled-up Holy Grail has become a barrier on its own, so I canceled it.
....Of course, another reason was because it would hit the people around it too.

After meditating a bit, I make a decision.

"Liza, do you want to try fighting a greater demon?"
『If Master orders, I will fight it fully even if I cannot win.』

Liza replied me immediately.

"Everyone, how about it?"
『Ofu couse.』
『O-of course, I'll fight nodesu!』
『Accepting Master's order.』
『A silly question isn't it~』
『Nn.』
『I-I'll work hard.』

After confirming everyone's reply, I tell them the strategy.

Their objective is purely buying time until I destroy the Holy Grail.
By using Behemoth the artificial spirit as a shield, I order the vanguards to attack with Hit-and-Run strategy.

"Lulu, are the Fortresses usable?"
『They can't. They've become "Hung-up".』
"Then I ask Lulu to guard Arisa and Mia. There might be demons lurking about, so you have to be quite careful."
『Yes!』

Even while having these conversations, I incessantly hit the sakuramochi demon with [Remote Stun] down to the ground, denting the surrounding ground.
I do this so that the damage would flow to the sky even if the demon used advanced magic.

"Arisa, devote yourself to isolate the battle area. If possible, use barrier magic to block the demon when it's about to use advanced magic."
『You say some difficult things. But, leave it to me! I will surely undertake Master's request (order).』

The strategy starts with Arisa's manly remark.

I hit the sakuramochi demon with [Explosion] once again, and change place with everyone after defeating it once.

"....■■ Magic Beast King Creation (Create Behemoth)"

Mia who's on the edge of the battlefield summons a creature that looks like a mix of an elephant and a hippo.
I finally understand its large size in this place where there are other objects around.

"PUWAOOOOWWNNN!!"

Behemoth roared and assaulted the sakuramochi demon, locking with each other.

"Magic Edge Spiral Strike (Vorpal Strike) nanodesu!"

Pochi who has been shot from the catapult through the [Acceleration Gate] on Echigoya's roof does the first hit to the sakuramochi demon.
The attack breaks through sakuramochi demon's protective barrier like it's a thin glass, and stops on the demon's body.
Then it's followed by Tama who's shot from the [Acceleration Gate].

--It's alright, they can fight against it quite evenly.

The sakuramochi demon excels at defensive power and revival, but its attack power is the lowest among all the greater demons I've fought so far.
It can't harm our girls who are protected by the golden armors made from orichalcum.
The demon has a trump card, but I'd be back from destroying the Holy Grail before he could use it.

Let's quickly destroy the Holy Grail and put and end to this fight.

I have to clean this up before the end of the day, for the sake of everyone's big performance, and the celebration for Lulu's coming of age!

1. Impossible to tl, she made a lame joke.
2. A reference of an old obscure show, Yobarete Tobidete Akubi-chan

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Part 26 - The Holy Grail under the Royal Capital

Satou's here. Using a polluted holy thing for a heretic ritual seems to be surprisingly major in fiction. Why don't the competent people of the heretics just make an evil container from the start anyway, I suspect that they have some strange obsession.

◇

I leave the sakuramochi demon to everyone, move to above the underground cave with Flash Drive, and make a passage that goes straight to the underground cave with earth magic.

After descending the passage in an instant, I come to the cave.

It's a considerably large cave. It has elliptical shape with enough space that could hold a whole stadium inside.
And, the heartbreaking thing is how the ground is littered with several hundreds mummified corpses.
Judging from the shabby clothes, they're corpses of laborers, prostitutes, beggars, orphans, and beastkin people. I understand that they weren't killed all at once looking at the piled up dust above the corpses.

--I'll bury them properly after this incident is over.

There's a lit bonfire on the opposite side of where I descended in the interior part of this cave, and a golden cup on top of a violet pedestal.
That's probably the Holy Grail.

Several men wearing violet robes around that Holy Grail are chanting something.
Comparing it with the men, it seems the Holy Grail is about five meter wide.

I sometimes feel unpleasant waves of magic power from the Holy Grail.
I'll stop the ritual before stranger things happen.

◇

I jump with Flash Drive to the place where the men are doing their ritual.

"Who are you! Are you obstructing the ritual! Foolish pretend hero!"

The man who shouts while scattering bubbles from his mouth is wearing a violet overcoat that cover his head and has water buffalo's horns on it.
This man seems to be the second son of the noble who was sheltering the Light of Liberty's members.

This noble's second son is the only one who doesn't participate in the ritual.

He probably can't chant like me.

"Sakura-colored ally--"

The noble's second son was going to say something, but I didn't wait until the end, prioritizing stopping their ritual.
I quickly strike every Light of Liberty member with 2-3 [Short Stun].
White sparks flew when the magic hit the members' bodies, but they couldn't actually stop it, and it succeeded crushing them.
The members are falling to the ground while vomiting blood.

Of course I'm not killing them.
Some relatively high level people were mixed among them, so I just shot them enough to make them faint.

"Th-the ritual!"

The noble's second son falls down and can't stand up when he saw the members suddenly getting knocked down.
This man is the only very low leveled one with his level 3, so I didn't shoot him with the [Short Stun].
He'd probably die if I did.

I hit him with my palm while holding back quite a bit, fainting the noble second son.

I can question the detail later.
The Holy Grail is more important right now.

I move next to the Holy Grail using Ground Shrink.
The holy grail is filled with transparent amber-colored liquid inside.
This amber-colored liquid is most probably substance created from magic power.
Just by getting closer to the Holy Grail, I can feel the pressure from the Magic Essence (Mana). It feels similar with the pressure coming from holy sword Excalibur when it's fully filled.
However, unlike with the holy sword, I feel sinister dread, or rather something similar when you listen to discords, such feeling of rejection coming from this Holy Grail.

Well, putting personal impression aside, I'll have to quickly do something to the Holy Grail.

First, I tried putting it into my storage just as is, but it wasn't possible.
It can't be helped, so I'm thinking of neutralizing it by extracting its magic power.

I slowly touch the Holy Grail and extract its magic power.
There's some strange resistance, it's quite difficult. It feels like the extracted magic power would be absorbed back if stop focusing.
I extract the magic power as if forcefully pulling it apart.
I put the extracted magic power into holy sword Durandal of course.

>[Curse Resistance] Acquired
>[Chaos Resistance] Acquired

--Oh, it's been awhile since the last resistance skill I got.

I allot both resistance skills with maximum points.
Now I should be fine even if chaos comes crawling in.

"You foolish hero! Be cursed by the Holy Grail and attain demon lord-hod! Be reborn as an apostle of Evil God and become our brethren!"

The noble's second son who sees me touching the Holy Grail laughs loudly while still groveling on the ground.

--He woke up already huh. It seems I held back too much.

I'm currently concentrating draining magic power from the Holy Grail rather than neutralizing the noble's second son.
The magic power that I had absorbed went back when I was just allocating points earlier.

The magic power inside the Holy Grail is a lot as expected, there's still half of it even though Durandal is at full capacity.
How long did this thing accumulate magic power....
While being astonished, I exchange Durandal with a prototype holy sword made of legendary metal from my storage, and drain the Grail's magic power into it.

"It can't be.... It took several months to drain those magic power from Royal Capital's Source y'know? Just a single person shouldn't have been possibly able to do anything...."

The noble's second son who was laughing loudly up till now changes to half smile, and furthermore he begins to talk in delirium.

I've extracted the Holy Grail's magic power until it's around 10% left.
I can just arrest and bring them to the king after this is over.

Looking at the map, it seems our girls are fighting evenly with the sakuramochi demon, I want to quickly settle this and join them.

◇

"....The plan to hatch His Highness into a new king is. Daamnnn you Herooo"

The noble's second son repeatedly curses me like he's gone mad while glaring at me.
However, it doesn't seem like he's going to actually do anything.

When the remaining magic power of the Holy Grail is at around 5%, the Grail begins to strangely vibrate and making strange sound.
Before I knew it, jet black tar-like liquid is accumulated on the bottom of the Holy Grail. It

seems this tar-like liquid is the reason why there are resistances when I'm extracting the Grail's magic power.

The tar-like liquid on the bottom of the Holy Grail is moving like an indeterminate life form.

"....■ Tusk Fly Swarm Summon (Summon Moskoff)"

One of the fallen members has finished chanting unnoticed, and summoned swarms of fist-sized fly.

"....■ Faith Death Soldiers (Animate Undead)"

This time another member used soul magic, changing the mummified corpses into attacking undeads.
Other members have also shot all kinds of elemental magic.

--I might have made light of them as just normal humans.

I'll reflect on it later.
I have to prioritize disposing these guys for now.

I stop trying to neutralize the Holy Grail temporarily, and deal with the current situation.

I destroy the magic coming at me with [Break Magic] in packs.
It seems [Break Magic] works for the undeads created with soul magic, the ones that are hit by my [Break Magic] return to become corpses once again.

I burn down the flying tusk fly swarms with [Fire Shot].
On the other side, the members take out white rod-shaped things, hold them up in the air, and shout suicidal things like they're praying.

"""O Long Horn, feed on our despair in exchange of tyrannical power"""

That [Long Horn] should be an item that can change someone into a mid-class demon. I remember the battle maniac boy who was hanging around the third prince using that in the Duchy Capital.

The members are swinging their arms to push the [Long Horns] into their foreheads.

--Like I'll let you

I use [Magic Hand] to take the [Long Horns] from the members' hands and put them into my Storage.
Taking things from people who are recovering from stun states is trivial.

I neutralize the members by using [Remote Stun] once again, and then bind them with magic-sealing ropes made from Thorn Foot ivies after thoroughly snatching away their equipment.

◇

After I've finished dealing with the members, I get back to the Holy Grail, and the moving jet black liquid has turned into oval-shaped crystal the size of a softball.

The items looks like it'll curse you if you do as much as touching it.
According to AR reading, it's [Evil Thought Crystal (Evil Philosophy)].
Since the Holy Grail's state was 'chaos', I'm glad that it didn't bring forth Nyarlathotep or something. I've got enough evil god with the [Dog-head Demon Lord] from before. I'd like to decline another helping for the time being.

Geometric violet lines of flashes sometimes appear and disappear on the jet black sphere. Its color and shape are different, but it looks similar to the Crimson Treasure of Furu Empire.

I steel myself and put the [Evil Philosophy] into my storage.
I was on guard for a bit, but I didn't get cursed or something.

I'd like to relinquish it if possible, but carelessly throwing it away could create unnecessary incidents, so I can't.
I can just throw it to the sun when I've become able to chant.

The [Evil Philosophy] seemed to act as a weight earlier as the Holy Grail is now movable, so I put it into my Storage.
It seems that it can collect and absorb magic power, so I'm going to make use of it when I'm making a Moving Fortress and a Flying Continent someday.

With this, the sakuramochi demon's reviving power should have weakened.
Next, if that Mito person can just do something about the magic circle on the Royal Capital's sky, I should be able to finish off the sakuramochi demon.

Lastly I'll have to watch out about any strange situation happening behind the scene I guess.
It seems there are perpetrators of the incident, maybe I should check it for a bit.

I make the summoning magician who's the highest leveled among the members to drink some smelling salt, getting him to forcefully recover from stun state.

"I'll be hearing you guys' objective."
"Objective? Our objective is but one. Destroying the Source through demon lord--"

The summoning magician strangely answers my question obediently.
So they're really just ideologists who have been caught on the idea of ruin.

"--And then, we will someday release Demon God-sama from the moon prison, destroy the pantheon of the gods and take the world back to the hands of men."

--What? They're not just merely ruin-seeking ideologists, do they also intend to spread science to the world?

"With Demon God-sama at the top, humans and only humans will build the correct world. At the dawn of that day, we『Light of Liberty』will bring prosperity to the world as its leader--"

....They're not.
The idea is similar to a dictator who envisions world conquest with weapons of mass destruction.

Perhaps, the person who created this guys' organization intends to fight against the gods who stagnated civilization like Corpse did.
The organization's name is [Light of Liberty] and all, I think maybe it originally had been furnished with a slightly nobler idea.
However, as a result of long years, the original ideal seems to have become a mere shell of its past.

I interrupt the summoning magician who's still continuing his speech, and change the question.

"I'll listen to you guys' ramble later. Speak the things you're scheming in this Royal Capital."
"Hmph, you watchdog of the foolish god who can't comprehend ideal."

The summoning magician keeps his mouth shut like his talkativeness from earlier was a lie.
I don't want to resort to torturing even though it won't take much time.

With Map Search I pick up the [Light of Liberty] and organizations that are linked to it.
Before I knew it, the members of [Light of Liberty] who are in the Royal Capital are only the ones here, and the high level scout who has infiltrated the royal castle.
I wonder if the other members have gone away from the Royal Capital, they've abruptly vanished.
Or perhaps, they've become demons using [Short Horns] or [Long Horns] like these guys trying to do earlier--come to think of it, there were several demons who were with the sakuramochi demon.
Then, the other members who had become demons were annihilated by my magic huh.

....Well, with demons, there's no other choice but to exterminate them, so worrying about it is futile.

The purpose of the scout who has infiltrated the royal castle doesn't seem to be assassinations of important people.
He's infiltrated the castle's underground, either going to the Forbidden Library or the Treasure Room.

--Alright, I'll use this info.

One second after the summoning magician shut his mouth, I stop thinking and resume the questioning.

"It's fine if you refuse to talk, but『Mirage』Polporo who's infiltrating the royal castle has been arrested in the underpass you know?"

"Wh-why do you know Sir Polporo. Did the Earl betray us?"
"The Earl is our piece that we have snuck to you bastards' rank from the start."

It's been awhile since my deception skill going wild.
By the way, Polporo is the name of the scout. His second name seems to be [Mirage].

"Then, Earl Bobi must also instigated for the Orbs to be carried into the royal castle too!"

--Huh? That's the name that appeared?
I was sure that it would be the name of the noble who was sheltering them instead....

If I remember right, it was the previous Earl Bobi who was collaborating with the [Wings of Liberty] that revived the Orc Demon Lord in the Duchy Capital.
Perchance, it's not just the previous earl, but each generation is also behind the [Wings of Liberty]?

This guy might be just misleading me, but I'll take a note of it for the time being.

More importantly, the orbs.
I search in my memory whether there's any orb that these guys need.

The [Gift Orbs] that Jeril and the others got were, [Chant], [Light Magic], and [Poison Resistance].
As for us, we found [Item Appraisal], [Water Magic], and [Paralyze Resistance].

There's no orb that should compel them to create this much confusion.
[Chant] has that much value from my point of view, but I understand that my sense of value is not commonplace.

Let's try to shake him up for a bit.

"So the objective is the orb after all."
"Kuh, if we couldn't get our hands on the orb, we have no choice but to give up on His Highness's hatching..."

--Necessary for hatching?
If I'm not mistaken it's a jargon about demon lord.

There's nothing like that among the six orbs I thought earlier.
Maybe there are other orbs in the Royal Capital?

I search [Gift Orb] on the map.
--There are. The other four are in the Treasure Room in the royal capital's underground.

I found [Diamond Body], [Meditation], [Succession God], and [Demon Summoning].
The [Demon Summoning] is the most likely one. [Succession God] is the second possibility I guess.

I'll have the king destroy the former.
I think the prophecy from Parion temple [The calamity is under the sakura tree] is referring to this orb.

"You watchdog, you can kill us. There is no need to be fixated with this land now that our wish for hatching has fallen apart. Even though this life ends due to our powerlessness against you, we will carry out our revenge on the next life after getting reincarnated as demons!"

The summoning magician shouts while grinding his teeth with uncontrollable rage.
The summoning magician's body is shaking like he's having a spasm, the sound of his grinding teeth echoes in the cave.

It's noisy, I guess I'll make him faint and bring him to the royal castle...
--The teeth's sound seems somewhat rhythmic.

The summoning magician's shoulders swell up with a sound.
The AR displays that the magician's state has changed to [Demonic Possession].

--The teeth rhythm from earlier was a spell huh?

"BARORO ROW"

Demon with cicada-like face appears as if it tears out the summoning magician's body.
He used his body as the summoning cost huh...

It was probably a desperate counterattack, but you only died a dog's death you know.
I take holy sword Durandal from Storage, and cut the cicada demon.

The blue afterglow leaves black dust in its place, I carry the members with [Magic Hand], and teleport to the royal castle.

◇

"I've arrested the perperators who summoned the greater demon see~"
"Nanashi-sama! T-then, the ones fighting over there are?"
"Those are our knights you see. I'll leave these guys to you, please take care of them."

I hand over the [Light of Liberty] members and the noble's second son to the prime minister and the imperial knights, and teleport to the next location.

After teleporting in front of the Forbidden Library, I retrace the path with Ground Shrink, heading to the Treasure Room.
Arriving at the treasure room, the door has been left opened, there are around 10 corpses of the knights who were guarding the room.

Strange.... The [Demon Summoning] and [Succession God] orbs are untouched.
Yet, the scout has escaped from the royal castle.

Did it run away after knowing that the plan had failed?
Or did he mistake it with another orb?

--Right on. My [Chant] orb has been stolen.

The other five [Gift Orbs] have disappeared too. They don't appear even after I search the map.
The scout has [Item Box] skill, so he probably hides it inside.

--I won't forgive it.

I close the Treasure Room's door, and tell the prime minister the situation of the treasure room and the scout.

Then I connect with the king with [Telephone], unilaterally tell him that I'll take care of the [Demon Summoning] and [Succession God] orbs, and then I put the two orbs into my Storage.
Whether they're going to be destroyed or returned, putting them inside my Storage is probably safer until the incident is over.

"Arisa, can you hear me."
『Uy, uy, it's clear. How is it there?』
"I've dealt with the Holy Grail underground. Is it alright if I leave you girls to be the sakuramochi demon's opponent for a while?"
"Then, I'm counting on you to buy some time."
『Fufuhn. You don't really mind if we defeat it right?』
"Yeah, if you can, then do it. But, don't push yourself since it can revive itself."
『Kufuu, having my joke ignored is becoming a habit.』

....Good grief, she's really someone who can't feel tension.

I tell everyone, "Be careful not to get hurt", and then teleport to the garden in the royal castle.
Now then, after catching the thief and retrieving the orbs, I'll give the persistent sakuramochi demon the final word, and go toward a happy new year.

With that determination in my heart, I flutter in the dancing-sakura night sky of the royal capital.

Part 27 - The Whereabouts of the Prophecy

Satou's here. I feel that the accuracy rate of the thing called prophecy increases the fuzzier it is. I feel that it can reveal any kind of answer later depending on its allowances and the people interpreting it.

Then, the prophecy in a world where gods exist is--

◇

While drawing blue afterglow, I go through the Royal Capital's sky fast with Flash Drive.

--Found him.

I land before the man in black clothing who's jumping through roofs--the high level scout belonging to [Light of Liberty].
Landing while crossing my arms and with both legs straight, I want to retort myself who do you think you are.

I call out to the scout who turns around going to run away after seeing me.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Arisa retorted me, "You should've said『Where are you going huh』there!" through [Tactic Talk], but I'm not interested in making a joke now, so I ignore her.

"Would you return the things you've stolen in the royal castle, thief-kun?"
"■ Item Box"

The scout obediently opens his Item Box and takes out a small bag out of it.
I thought he was just faking it, but since the marker I've put on my [Chant] orb reappears, it seems to be the real thing.

"Good prudence. I'll stop myself from tearing you limb from limb."

While still being silent, the scout throws the small bag with my [Chant] orb inside, high in the air. It's probably for making a chance.
I fire around 10 [Short Stun] toward the scout, and approach the small bag with Flash Drive.

Yosh, got it--

『Return』

--the small bag disappears just before I'm about to catch it.

The scout who's using shadow as his shield below me is currently entering his own shadow while holding the small bag on his hand.

--Tsk, shadow magic huh.
No, this guy should only have light magic and holy magic.
Then, this must be an ability of his item.

"I won't let you!"

I dive into the indefinite shadow that the scout has made.
I intrude the sub-space created by the shadow vigorously.

I can't see anything since there's no light, but the AR reading and the radar are different.
The markers I've put on the scout and the [Chant] orb tell me his location.

I couldn't do anything when I went into the shadow created by the [No-Life King] during Mia's kidnapping, but it's different now.
I fly with Flash Drive in the shadow space, snatch the small bag from the scout and put it into my Storage.
And then, I immediately put all the orbs inside in a special folder.

Safe. I feel relieved now.

Next, I just have to escape.
I was able to go out before by yelling fiercely.

I can probably do the same now.

"Retrieval complete!"

The black space is broken, and I'm back at the Royal Capital.

"I-impossible. Who are you bastard! It's too nonsensical. Interfering the space not with magic but yell....

--LWEEENN.

I heard a sound like someone's strumming glass.
What is that sound?

"D-don't tell me, you're not a hero? Y-you bastard, are you god, no, that kind of stupid thing shouldn't be."

Red rope-like patterns appear on the skin of the scout who's begun talking in slur.
His back is transforming.

Apparently, this guy is a fiend drug habitual user.
I don't know the cause, but perhaps, his monster element is stimulated when his mind gets disturbed, it's probably the same reason as a reincarnated person changing into demon lord.

I don't have any duty to save him, but I'll be sparing myself from seeing splatter film-like scene before my eyes.
The fiend transformation probably stops if his magic power is drained.

As if obstructing me from invoking [Mana Drain], several sakura-colored feelers fall from the sky.

I invoke the magic as is, create Holy Edge on my hand and cut away the feelers.
The scout's marker disappears after he was swallowed by the sakuramochi demon.

I open the map to check, but the scout hasn't died yet.
His current location is in a place where map doesn't exist.

--I might have misunderstood something.

I move to the sky above the sakuramochi demon with Flash Drive.
Its remaining health is only at 20%.

"Liza, beat it."
"Understood."

While leaving blue light tracks, Liza charges at the sakuramochi demon.
Behemoth that's controlled by Mia blocks the feelers that are trying to attack her, while Arisa uses space magic to reflect the advanced magic shot by the demon's chanting head.

And then Liza who's approached the sakuramochi demon by combining the golden armor's Aerial Step and Flickering Movement pierces the sakura-colored body with her white spear.
Defensive magic walls repeatedly stack in front of the sakuramochi demon to block Liza's white spear.

However, those are meaningless.

Liza's white spear penetrates the sakuramochi demon's defensive walls as if ripping a thin film.

--Dragon fang penetrates all that exist.

The fang is effective even when it's separated from the dragon's body.

--Dragon fang ruins even demon lords, it's the ultimate blade.

In that case, no matter what defensive walls, there is no way that it won't penetrate the defense of a mere greater demon.

Liza's dragon spear, Heiron, pierces the sakuramochi demon's body, shaving its remaining health completely.

"That spear is unfair poyoooo"

While leaving that scream, the sakuramochi demon disappears into sakura-colored mist.

◇

So it's really like that--

I'm not looking at the sakuramochi demon, but the marker I've put on it.
During the time before it's revived, the demon's location is like with the scout, [Space without map].

Looks like I misunderstood what Ten-chan said.

The way to defeat the sakuramochi demon is not by [Using forbidden magic that has enough power to destroy the surrounding space], but using forbidden magic that can [destroy the surrounding space], otherwise the demon can't be defeated.

Right about then, the shout of Mito whom I've almost forgotten echoes.

"....■■■■■■ Divine Destruction!!!"

The sound of rain like it's from countless wind-bells reverberate in the royal capital sky.
The next moment, Mito's magic destroys the magic circle that was covering the whole Royal Capital.

"You did well Mito. I'll leave this body to you, just leave him to me."

Ten-chan who had even less presence shouts out joyfully, and loses her strength as if her battery's been cut off.
--What is this guy doing?

"....Connection Lost. Confirming the user's log-out. Restoring the right for avatar's control. Shifting to autonomous mode. Mito, please order me."
"Acchaa, victims would likely appear if Ten-chan's real body comes."

If I'm to believe Ten-chan's robotic words, until just now, the real Ten-chan was controlling this homonculus from some place away.

And, judging from what Mito has just said, Ten-chan's identity is--

"Alrightt! Defeated it for the seventh time!"

Arisa's energetic words interrupt my train of thought.

Just like earlier, the sakuramochi demon is disappearing into sakura-colored mist.
If the secret to its revival is just as I've guessed, then--

I turn off all the AR readings and sharpen my mind.

--There!

The slight odd sensation when the demon is appearing in the normal space--I've caught the gap.
That gap might be as small as a single molecule.

--However, a gap is a gap.

If I can break the shadow subspace, then there's no reason for it to not work on the same subspace.

"Woooooo!"

With a loud scream that doesn't sound like me, I wrench open the gap in space with both my hands.

"Outrageous poyo! If it isn't Origin Magic--"

I heard some interesting words, but destroying the demon takes precedence now.
I strike the 90 small sakuramochi demons lurking in the subspace with [Condense] and [Laser] combo, infringing them.

--The poyo poyo is noisy, but I won't leave even one of them remain.

After destroying the last one, the log displays that I've defeated a greater demon.
The jet black mist disappears into the sky together with the crumbling space.

◇

The radar displays the scout man once again.
I thought that he was killed together with the sakuramochi demon, but he seems to be fine.

The scout who's sitting on the ground with his back facing me is muttering something like he's delirious.
The stimulation of the pattern on his body has stopped, it's blackened, so it seems the worst case scenario has been avoided.
It'd be troubling if his muttering is a spell, so I strike him with three [Short Stun].

I move next to the scout with Sky Drive while carrying the [Thorn Foot] ivy for binding him on one hand.

--Something is bothering me.

When I rotate my thought to grasp whether I've overlooked something, the real nature of the odd feeling is revealed.

--That's right. It's the feeler of the sakuramochi demon.

Why did the sakuramochi demon save the scout?
From the demon's point of view, men are nothing more than toys.

The [Short Stun] magic is blocked by the scout's body.
The sakuramochi demon's parting gift huh!

Then--.

".....■ Invoke Deity"

The scout who's holding a huge magic core on his stomach, holds it up to the sky, and then the next moment, intense white light engulfs.
It might be too late, but I immediately invokes [Laser] and bisect the core that the scout is holding.

--It was for the sake of buying time for chanting this spell huh.

But there's nothing happening even after I've readied myself.
The scout who's finished the spell has become mummy-like and falls to the ground.
I wonder if the core he was holding evaporated at the last moment, I don't see it anywhere.

....Maybe, the chanting failed?

"Hey? What was that just now?"
"It seems he was trying to make god descend..."

Arisa absentmindedly asked.

"Satou! It's dangerous, the spirits are clamoring, they seem like they'll cry. Every child is trying to dive into the ground. The above seems to be scary, the above you know."

In accordance to Mia's warning in unusually long sentences, I look up to the sky.

--I see three black lines with the moon on their back.

The instant I saw those lines, I was caught in chilly fear as if icicles had gouged out my body from inside.
Even though my Fear Resistance is at maximum, it's no use.

The fear cannot be completely removed.

Tama slips behind my mantle and holds onto my leg while trembling.
Mia is holding tightly on my other leg.

At present, it seems only me, and these two can perceive the dreadfulness of those black lines.

"Nana, activate『Castle』! I allow the release of the limiter so use it!"
"Yes, Master.『Castle』Mode Start."
"Everyone gathers near Nana! Lulu, activate『Fortress』too."
"Y-yes!"

I also catch Mito and Ten-chan's cast-off with [Magic Hand], and gather them with everyone together.
Following Nana, I also activate [Castle] mode like hers.
This is the superior version of the [Fortress] that was used in the fight against the floormaster, it has more than three times the defensive power.

"Eh? What's this magic? It's the same level as the Holy Shield and the Holy Armor, but the magic power is knitted strangely. It's too precise. Humans shouldn't be able to knit magic power like this...."

Mito who sees the defensive wall of [Castle] that our golden armor created mutters such things like she in delirium.
However, I don't have the leeway to keep her company right now.

Even though it should have been fine with this, my Crisis Perception doesn't stop.

--Right, I've forgotten.

"Arisa, please get ready with your space magic."

--The prophecy that Sera told me was [Nightmare visits the Royal Capital, Black Calamity alight from the heaven].

"Eh? It'll interfere with Nana's defense you know?"
"Use it when the defense created by the three of us are broken through. When the time comes, escape from the Royal Capital."

--The former was probably about the sakuramochi demon. Then what about the later?

Everyone is surprised at my words and turns around.
Arisa asks on behalf of everyone.

"Are those three lines falling from the sky that dangerous?"
"Ah, if my guess is correct then--"

I take out the Divine Sword from the my Storage.

--The enemy this time is god.>

Part 28 - God

Satou's here. I wonder why are the protagonists of fictional worlds go against enemies they absolutely can't win?

I think it's good to run away when you need to, making another attempt with redoubled efforts.

◇

"--If your guess is correct, what?"
"They're powerful you see."

While looking at the Black Lines that look as if they've split the moon into four parts, I do my best to answer her question lightly.
It might be overly hasty of me to judge them as enemies, but something whispers deep in my heart, "They are something that cannot coexist with us."

It seem they've finally arrived in the range of Shiga Kingdom, AR readings appear beside the Black Lines.

--UNKNOWN.

It's the same reading as the mysterious existence that appeared as a little girl during my fight with the dog-head demon lord in the desert.

They're 10 meter wide, and 9 kilometer long, I thought they were person-shaped, but it's bizarrely slim....
I feel they're thicker, but I probably see that because the Black Lines are sucking in light.
They come falling relaxedly, and stay in the air about 100 meters above the royal capital.

"What are those? Hair?"
"But, I can feel amazzing magic power from them."

Mito replied to Arisa who muttered when she saw the three Black Lines above.

....Hair?

Now that you mention it, they certainly look like one.

--God's hair

What is this anger that I've never felt before.
I wonder if this is how Office Ladies feel when they hear old men's gag.

....However, my fear has disappeared.

When I think about it, it's been proven that god can die.
Moreover, I don't know what kind of body part are those, but it's certain that those aren't the god's real body.

I'll destroy these, which are at best parts of summoned god, with the Divine Sword.

"Master, you're not angry like usual?"
"--You're not angry?"

Dang you Arisa, she's quite sharp.
How'd she know under this golden helmet.

"I'll go take care of it for a bit."
"Eh? Weren't they dangerous?"
"I'll do something with this somehow."

I hold out the sheathed Divine Blade, and let out a smile inside the golden helmet unseen from outside.

"Master, I'll accompany you."
"Pochi too, Pochi will accompany too."
"Master, hoping to follow you."

Liza, Pochi, and Nana express their wishes to follow me, but I can't nod to that.
Before, the holy sword couldn't even interfere with the god's fragments that came out of [No-life King] Zen, let alone destroy it.
The dragon spear that Liza holds might be able to get pass it but the gamble is too disadvantageous.

"No. I'm sorry but I can't take you girls along. The opponent is too dangerous."

I persuade them, and the three obediently understand.

When I look at the direction my mantle was pulled, there are Mia with pale face, and Tama who looks like she's going to cry.

"Not good, that's not good nano. Absolutely, nano."
"Letsgo home~?"

I feel sorry to let go of the two who look really worried, but I have a hunch that the royal capital would be destroyed if those things move.
I gently pull the two away from me and give them to Liza.

"Everyone stay here. It's my job from here on."

The defense of these girls will be abated if I move, but there's no time to change equipment.
I entrust Nana to judge when to pull back, and tell Arisa and Liza to not hesitate when they retreat.

◇

Crimson blaze came flying from the royal castle toward the three Black Lines.
I don't know whether it was an advanced magic or forbidden magic, but that blaze disappeared the moment it hit the Black Line.
One of the Black Lines turns around from its base and changes into spiral form--.

Using Flash Drive, I place myself between the Black Lines and the royal castle.
I was barely in time to change my title to [God Slayer].

--I block the whip-like Black Line that's trying to trash the royal capital with the Divine Sword I've hold in front of my body.

The Black Line that touches the Divine Sword split into two after scattering black-colored sparks.
When the scattered sparks were fading, I saw the true color of those sparks. That was a very deep violet color.

--Kuh, heavy.

I resisted the inertia with Flash Drive, yet I was still pushed enough to almost make me crash to the royal castle in an instant.

When I look below to the royal castle, there are Sera, and the people from Muno Barondom. Even the king and Prime Minister, I've interacted with them too much to abandon them.
The Shiga 33 Wands who foolishly attacked would have only reaped what they sowed, but I don't intend to abandon the other people.

The torn Black Lines take some distances away from the royal castle at once.
The Black Line that has been split into two are merely split, they get back to its original shape while moving like swimming.

I separate myself from the royal castle with Sky Drive, approaching the Black Lines in the sky.
I extract the magic power of Durandal I've taken from Storage and then pour that magic power into the Divine Sword.
The jet black blade lengthens little by little everytime magic power is poured.
The blade has lengthened to more than 10 meter long when I've poured all the magic power of the holy sword.

There's only one thing left until the preparation is complete now.

I knew that word after pouring a certain amount of magic power into it.
That word was conveyed to me from the Divine Sword.

I declare the last word--

"Divine Sword. Let it <<PERISH>>.

I probably shouldn't have done that.

--True darkness befalls the moon.

Light that comes in contact with the Divine Sword perish.

--Stillness befalls the night sky.

Space that comes in contact with the Divine Sword perish.

--And then, the part of the Black Line that comes in contact with the Divine Sword exfoliates and becomes mist, and then disappears like it's sucked by the Divine Sword's blade.

I run up the Black Line with Flash Drive, and concentrate letting the whole nine kilometer long body perish until the top.

There are two remaining.

◇

"What, it's easier than I thought--"

I speak to myself as such after feeling disappointed with how fragile the Black Line is.

However, my flighty heart cools down as if it's been poured with cold water when I see the scene under my eyes.

One part of the royal castle I see below has completely disappeared.
Fortunately the main building where the people of royal castle are gathering seem to be fine, however, if the place I used the Divine Sword's [Scripture] were the main building, I would have never got back the things that would be lost.

--Must reflect on it.

Postponing the deep reflection for now, I'll prioritize settling the situation now.

I understand from AR reading that the sword's ruination range is about several hundreds meters long.
I should take the Black Lines up high in altitude so there would be no victims on the ground.

I attack the Black Lines with the long range [Laser], I've erased the <<PERISH>> state of the Divine Sword during the attack.
It feels painful since the air has disappeared, but looking at my endurance and stamina gauge, I'm probably fine for one or two hours. What a cheat body if I do say so myself.

When I've erased the second Black Line, I'm bothered with Black Line's individuality, or rather its skeleton-like intelligence.

Like the non-active monsters in MMO, it won't react even if the other Black Lines are attacked as long as it's not being attacked itself.

Whether the scout's deity summoning failed, or due to the Black Line having its own role, it's too enigmatic.

My thought wandered for merely several seconds like that, however, those several seconds seem to be problematic--

◇

Faraway on the northeast, white light appears as if rising morning sun.
That light converges and becomes one bundle of white light, and then it bisects the last Black Line into two.
Even after bisecting the Black Line, the light powerfully went straight ahead, and changed the grain-producing region over the royal capital into ashes and fissure.

The light was shot from the northeast direction where the sacred mountain lies, the Fujisan mountains.

Coming here flying with speed that's not inferior to my Flash Drive, a platinum arrowhead--huge Heavenly Dragon that's over 180 meters in length.

....So Ten-chan is really a Heavenly Dragon (Tenryu).

It's probably the Heavenly Dragon that appeared in the legend of Ancient King Yamato.
The Heavenly Dragon's fangs that's said to [Pierce all that exist] crunch the Black Line, and the horn and claws that aren't inferior to the fangs also cut off the Black Line.

While observing that, and erasing the upper part of the Black Line that was bisected by the [Dragon Breath] shot by the Heavenly Dragon, I descend.

The Black Line that's become short coil around the Heavenly Dragon's body even while being torn.
Moreover, it seems part of it have assimilated with the Heavenly Dragon, her platinum scales are turning black.

When I'm about one kilometer above the ground, I absorb all the magic power in the Divine Sword and put it into the holy sword Durandal.
The Divine Sword's <<PERISH>> state is canceled once its magic power is below a certain amount just like how it works with holy sword's scripture, so the Divine Sword is back to its original state.

Cracking sounds like breaking boards echoes in the sky of the royal capital.
It's from the Heavenly Dragon.

『KUROOOUUUUNN!!』

The Heavenly Dragon that's been encroached by the Black Line screams.
Since I, who could speak dragon language, couldn't understand its meaning, it must have been a scream.

I grab the tail of the suffering Heavenly Dragon in order to drop her to the ground, I make giant swings in the air and throw her outside the royal capital.
I myself think that I'm treating her cruelly, but this is a necessary measure.
There's no telling how many people would fall victim if such a huge body fell on the royal capital.

The Heavenly Dragon made a deep valley on the royal capital's grain-producing region that's been changed into a wasteland.
To the farmers, I'm sorry. Please forgive me for now, I'll restore them when I've become able to chant.

◇

I mark the fragments of the Black Line that ate the Heavenly Dragon on the map, and erase them one by one with the Divine Sword.
I don't know what'd happen if such things remain.

Before long, an unfortunate mole monster that appeared touched one.

--At the next moment.

The mole's body is turned inside out, and it becomes moving slime-like thing with exposed magic core.
It takes the surrounding debris and monster's corpses, and becomes gigantic.

The mole that should have been level 20 becomes level 50 when it has finished turning big.
Apparently, this doping is the reason why the scout summoned the Black Lines.

I launch the mole slime up in the air with [Remote Stun], strike it with [Condense] and [Laser] combo from directly below, and turn its magic defense and body into small pieces.
It seems normal attack works for it besides the Black Lines itself.

I glare at the falling magic core.
The Black Line has slipped into the exposed magic core.

I jump up from the ground, and cut the magic core along with the Black Line with the Divine Sword, annihilating it.

◇

Using Flash Drive, I head toward the destroyed hill where the Heavenly Dragon is rampaging.
Apparently after parting with me, she was going toward the nearby town after destroying the hill.

I go to the direction the Heavenly Dragon is tumbling with Flash Drive, and then kicks her solid scale.

『GYURORORORONN』

Oops. Her health gauge has been decreased by 20%.
Heavenly Dragons are unexpectedly fragile huh?

Her unfocused eyes like she's lost her mind turn toward me, I evade the shot [Dragon Breath] with Flash Drive.
She was going to move her head while firing the breath, changing the firing line, but I move next to her head with Flash Drive, and kick her face from the side to turn the breath toward the sky so there'll be no victim.

According to AR reading, the Heavenly Dragon's state is [Frenzy], and [Encroachment: Demon God].

--Those Black Lines were parts of the [Demon God] huh!

The identity of the Black Line that was UNKNOWN becomes clear after it encroached the Heavenly Dragon.

There are 27 Black Lines that are encroaching the Heavenly Dragon. The majority are gathering on three places, the head, the reverse scale, and the tail.

--Then.

It'll be a rough handling, but please forgive me.
With the Divine Sword in hand, I approach the Heavenly Dragon.

The Heavenly Dragon who's lost her mind attacks me with her tail that's moving faster than the speed of sound.
It was written in the Ancient King Yamato's picture book that the Heavenly Dragon's scales repel holy swords.
It's said that the scale even blocks the magic swords of the [Golden Wild Boar King].

However, it is no different than a scrap of paper before the Divine Sword.
After cutting the Heavenly Dragon's tail, I annihilate the Black Lines that coil the tail.

I run on the Heavenly Dragon's back, and blast away the Black Lines, gouging the body together with them.
It's slightly rough, but If I do it leisurely and result in complete encroachment of her whole body, it'll be no joke. The damage that'd appear would probably be higher than demon lords'.
It's not like I'm not treating her like a lady, but I feel only little sense of guilt when it's in her dragon form.
Besides, the endurance strength of a Heavenly Dragon should be durable enough.

I harden my heart and erase the Black Lines from the Heavenly Dragon.
Even while being dyed in dragon's blood, I was able to erase most of the Black Lines in just 10 seconds.

--The only remaining ones are on the reverse scale and the head.

I can't gouge them together with the body with these.
I guess there's no choice but to grab the Black Lines and tear it off. But I could be encroached myself if carelessly touch it.
I form magic armor on the hand that doesn't hold the Divine Sword.

And then, when I'm about to grab them just like that, my thought stop.

--The opponent is a god, even though it's just the part. Careless actions lead to ruin.

I admonish myself for my conceit, and alter the magic armor.

If magic swords can be changed into holy swords by altering their composition.
And if magic edge has sub-type like holy edge.

God's power is like that too, I should be able to reproduce it, right.

I borrow the power of the Divine Sword, and dye the magic armor with divinity.
The red color of the magic armor gradually changes into jet-black like the Divine Sword's.

--It's just like the color of the Black Line.

Don't think about unnecessary things, Satou.
Right now is--.

I grab the Black Line sprouting on the Heavenly Dragon's head like an ahoge with the hand that's coated in divinity, and uproot it.
I heard an especially loud scream from the Heavenly Dragon, but now is not the time to pay attention to it.

I annihilate the pulled Black Line with the Divine Sword in my right hand.

And then, when I was pulling the Black Line coiling on the reverse scale, I inadvertently pulled the reverse scale together with it.
It seemed to be quite painful, the Heavenly Dragon let out a heartbreaking howl and then fainted.
While annihilating the Black Line pulled from the reverse scale, I apologize to the Heavenly Dragon in my mind.

>Defeated [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God]
>Defeated [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God]
>Defeated [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God]

>Skill [] Acquired

>Title [God Spirit] Acquired
>Title [One who Violated the Taboo] Acquired
>Title [Torture King] Acquired
>Title [Sadistic] Acquired
>Title [Natural Enemy of Heavenly Dragon] Acquired

There are some disagreeable titles, but it's too late to retort to the one who governs the system after all this time.

My level has become 312, whether it was because I overhunted greater demons, or because I defeated the [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God].
Was the skill without a name just a bug of the acquisition indicator, it's not in the skill list.

Even while feeling like I'd faint from the mental fatigue, I heal the Heavenly Dragon's wounds with treasured high grade recovery medicines and healing magic.
The cut tail connected itself as anticipated, but the pulled reverse scale, and the fangs, horn, and claws that were broken during the fight weren't able to be restored.
Her claws grow back after I gave her the high grade recovery medicine that had been charged with magic power to the limit, so the fang and the horn should regrow if persist.

My thought is neglectful, I wonder if it's because I'm tired.
It might be the first time I've ever been this tired ever since I came to the different world.

Moreover.... My left hand can't feel anything since a while ago.

I take off the golden armor's gauntlet in order to check the condition of my left hand.
I was at a loss for words when I saw the left hand that appeared from the gauntlet.

That hand has lost the color of skin, dyed jet black....

Part 29 - The Black Left Arm

Satou's here. "The main character who wields the forbidden power has lost one of his body part as the compensation."

It's a situation that happens often in shounen manga and novels with hot-blooded protagonists, but when it's happening to me in reality, it's not really something to joke around.

◇

I overlook the left hand dyed in non-lustrous jet black color.

I probably would be excited and welcomed this while saying, "Quiet down! O my left arm!" if I were still suffering from Chuunibyou, but now I simply feel completely perplexed.

I can move my fingers without problem, but I can't feel anything with my arm.
Like this, supplying magic power to Nana won't be fun, and I won't be able to enjoy various things with the beautiful onee-sans when I visit the shop.

--Wonder if a new arm will regrow if I cut it?

A stupid idea floats in my mind, probably because I'm tired.
Normally I would have never chosen this, but at this time I felt like it was a good idea as if I had received a divine revelation.

I put the Divine Sword that has served its purpose into Storage, and take out holy sword Durandal.

Holding Durandal with my right hand, I lightly tap-tap it on my left dark hand.
I feel hard metal-like sensation from it.

The darkened part is until the part between the wrist and the elbow.
I avoid that part and aim at the flesh-colored part.

I make up my mind and swing down Durandal to my left arm.
Clank, there was a light sound, and then it's split into two.

--The holy sword Durandal is.

Breaking the holy sword of divine gift, Durandal, just how hard it is.
My tired mind silently retort.

Magic power is leaking from the broken part of the holy sword, becoming violent wind that rages the surrounding.
I catch the flown blade with the usual [Magic Hand] and control the sword in my hand so

that the magic power won't leak out.

I put the broken blade in its sheath and then I also put the other remaining part of Durandal into the sheath.

When I tried its scripture before, some small scratches from the fight with the [Golden Wild Boar King] were restored.
I decide to recite the scripture since there's nothing to lose in doing it.

"<<HANG ETERNALLY>> Durandal"

Blue light overflows from the sheath.
After the light subsides, I took it out of the sheath, and Durandal had returned to its original form before it was broken.

I'd be lying if I didn't expect this, but I really can't believe that it'd recover from being broken.
As expected of the stable opening performer. I'll keep relying on it from now on.

Now then, let's try cutting my hand once more.

When I tried touching the part I cut earlier, it felt the same as the darkened part even though it's flesh-colored.
I put the golden armor's arm part to the storage, and after checking that it's the soft part with my right hand on the upper arm, I cut the part between the shoulder and the elbow with Durandal.

Red blood spills, and the arm is falling to the ground.
There's no pain thanks to Pain Resistance, but it's not something that's pleasant to see.

I put the arm into the Storage when it's falling, and block the cut with [Magic Hand].
Blood drip little by little to ground from the base of my arm.

--The next moment.

Swoosh, green colored bundle of vines grows toward the sky from the ground.
I took some distance away since I thought that a plant-type monster had appeared, but the thing that has grown to 10 meter high is the vine of a sweet potato.
Excluding its abnormal scale, it's a completely normal plant.

Don't tell me, it's because of my blood?
I can try experimenting it when I've got some free time, but right now is not the time to do such thing.

I heal the cut wound with [Aqua Heal] in order to prevent blood from dripping more than this.
The blood has stopped, but it doesn't seem like my arm will regrow.

I've expected this much.
During my experiment with mouses, [Aqua Heal] couldn't restore lost limbs either.

Before I take out an upper grade magic potion, I use my right hand to uproot the potato and put it into Storage.
It'll be annoying if this potato becomes a new seed of trouble after all.

I take out an upper magic potion that has been fully charged with magic power beforehand and drink it in one go.
In my experiment with mouses, this restored the lost arms and legs.

However, my arm doesn't regrow even after I wait for a while.

So my plan failed....
I grieve at my numbed mind from fatigue.

I also desist from connecting the cut hand from earlier back.

--What?

Something is caught in the corner of my consciousness.

For some reason, I got a flashback about when I dived into the scout's shadow.

--That's right.

Why was I able to interfere the shadow space with spirit, destroying it.
The sakuramochi demon said [Primeval Magic] or something....

There are many cases in fictional works where this kind of magic somehow does something with [Spirit] and [Image].
It should be enough if there's a material.

I take out the treasured magic potion barrel from Storage, and soak my cut arm in it.
I scream loudly with fighting spirit while remembering the scene from an old anime where the character got resurrected from bleached bones.

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

I don't know whether something called [Primitive Magic] really exists, or [Self-Healing] skill showed its full potential.

However, rather than that--

The hand I've pulled from the barrel, which has been properly restored, is many times more important.
It seems the wound was re-opened during the restoration, the upper grade magic potion in the barrel has been ruined with my blood getting mixed in, but I can just make more something like potion.

I've got a lot of Blood Spheres, that are needed for making upper grade magic potion, from True Ancestor Ban.

Now then, I guess I'll go back to the Royal Capital....

I contact Arisa with [Telephone] magic.

『Arisa I've cleaned up this side. Let's reunite in the mansion.』
『I-is it over already? I could hear some loud sound from outside the royal capital, are you alright? Are you injured anywhere?』
『Yeah, I'm fine.』

I tell her so and cut the call.

Before invoking teleport magic, I exterminate the remaining monsters in the royal capital with [Remote Arrow] and [Short Stun].
There are some remaining in the underground and the indoors, but there isn't anyone nearby there, there are opposing forces and it's not urgent, so leaving them for later should be alright.

"Ten-cha~n"

I heard the voice of Mito coming here flying while fluttering on her broom.
There's the homonculus Ten-chan beside Mito too.

If Mito's identity is just as I've guessed, then I want to tell her that I'm Suzuki Ichirou and various other things.
However, there are other things that need to be done right now.
I can meet Mito as many times as I want if I just put a marker on her.

I leave the fainted heavenly dragon, and teleported back to my mansion in the royal capital.

◇

"Master~?"

After returning to Pendragon Mansion, the first person who comes welcoming me is Tama.
I catch Tama who's jumping straight to my head with [Magic Hand] and give her a lift.

"I'm home, Tama."
"Not injured~?"
"Yeah, of course."

I tell a lie to the worried Tama.
No, it's the truth in my current condition.

"Satou."

Mia embraces me with a thud.

Our armament are obstructing each other, so the reunion doesn't look good.

Following the two, the other girls are happy for my safety.

"Everyone, thank you for your hard work. I'll ask you to do another job when the dawn comes, so get some nap for three hours."

I took off my golden armor's helmet, and told so to everyone.
My disguise mask was removed together with the helmet.

"Understood."
"Aye!"
"Yes nanodesu."

Everyone answers unanimously to my instruction, and matching that, their empty stomaches also sing in chorus.
It seems they're hungry after fighting a long battle.

I take out a wagon with pre-made light meals and fruit drinks for midnight snacks behind everyone.

"Then, I shall make something light before we sleep."
"No, I've prepared them already, for those who are hungry, eat them and then take a nap. You can take off the golden armor since you're going to act in your usual condition after the sleep."

I stop Lulu and point at the wagon behind everyone.

"Wa~i"
"Roasto beefu-san nanodesu!"
"Announcing the existences of karages with bones."
"They look truly delicious."
"Parfait."
"Arisa, there are potatoes too."
"....Since when."

Except Arisa who looks like she needs an explanation, everyone begins to capture the sandwiches and karages.
Lulu who usually minds her manner seems to be quite hungry too, she has food on both her hands, putting them into her mouth in a hurry.

"Sleep after you eat lightly okay. You should sleep early since I'll wake you up forcefully once it's dawn."

Everyone nods while continuing to chew their food, silence comes to the room.

"--Don't you need a space magician?"

However, Arisa who's teleported to the corridor ahead stands.

"So, where is Master going to alone?"
"I'm not going out to fight. I'm just going to help people who are trapped under the debris you see."
"Then, everyone should together--"

I shake my head before Arisa finish her sentences.

"Don't force yourself. Everyone has exceeded their fatigue limit after continuously fighting a greater demon. They'll collapse from overworking if they don't rest their nerves once."
"But isn't Master the same too."

It's the truth that I'm mentally tired, nevertheless I'd feel bad leaving the people that need to be rescued alone.

"It's alright, I'll change places with everyone and get some sleep when it's morning."

I persuade Arisa while patting her head, and I get back to the Royal Capital's sky through Echigoya Workshop's roof.
I've re-equipped the disguise mask, but I use the Mito-like disguise mask that I'm going to use for evening party on the area around my eyes where the golden helmet isn't covering.

◇

Before commencing the rescue operation, I'll report to every place I'm related to.

I contact the king in the royal castle with [Telephone], and report that I've finished exterminating the greater demon and the three lines that appeared later--I told him that they were magic weapons prepared by the demon.
In addition, I also tell him the location and the number of the remaining monsters, and ask for the Shiga Eight Swords and the holy knights to dispatch.
Just in case, I asked him to tell the citizens not to eat meat from red rope pattern monsters when he announces the resolution of the incident with [Public Information Space]. Even though I think it's fine, it'll be troubling if there are some strange side effects.

Next, I contact Echigoya's manager with [Telephone] magic, tell her that the battle is over, and instruct her to prepare the necessary arrangements for reviving the royal capital from now on.
Even though she should just have a sleepless night in fear, the manager replied normally, "Certainly", and began to act.
It's truly reliable of her, but please be careful of workaholic okay.

Next, I also tell Porina the workshop manager who's taking refuge in Echigoya's workshop underground to start the preparation for helping the victims.
I don't have much time, so I only told a word of gratitude to every member of Echigoya Firm starting from Tifaliza and Nell.

◇

There are about 8670 people that need to be helped.
There are a lot, but it might be what can be expected from the leading city of the continent with 200.000 population.
Most of them are injured people who ran away outside the royal capital. It seems there are priests and priestess, but looks like their healing aren't enough.
Among those, around 1000 are people under collapsed buildings, and people who were left behind in buildings that caught fire.

There are many who are from the lower-income class area. The victims from the wealthy and noble area are in two-digit number too, but they're few overall, so I go to the low-income class area first to help.

I saw a pair of young brother and sister frantically trying to move the debris on top of a fallen building.

"Someone! Please help! Mother and the others are under here!"
"No one's coming. Help clear even one piece of debris if you got time to scream for help."
"Onii"

Checking the map, there are these children's mother and several other people under this building.

--My way of helping is quite simple.

While landing on top of the building, I specify the range on the map and put the debris and the building materials into my Storage.
After putting the debris into my Storage in a flash, just like that, the people who were under the building lay bare.
The siblings who suddenly lost their footholds screamed while falling, but I catch them with [Magic Hand] and put them on my shoulders.

There were many injured people, so I healed them all with [Aqua Heal], and carry them to the safety on the side of the road with [Magic Hand].
The hands of the siblings who are moved from meeting their mother are in bad shapes too, so I also heal them.

I lightly raise my hand toward their words of gratitude, and immediately head toward the other people who need help.
I'm doing rescue at the rate of 16 people per minute, putting the corpses of monsters I find along the way.
I don't remember leaving any corpse behind, but I'll prioritize saving people who are alive for now.

Along the way, the king began a broadcast, and then the people who were panicking began to noticeably calm down. As expected of the king of a large country.

I completed the rescue operation faster than I had planned. It didn't even take one hour due to me abandoning prudence.
It's usually plain, but the effect of unique skill is immense after all.

Next, I go outside the royal capital, and heal the injured people with [Aqua Heal] while still floating in the air.
I've expected people thanking and cheering me, but there are even people who fall prostrate and pray to me.

--Please do that kind of thing toward God.

◇

It's two hours before dawn.

This time I'm removing debris blocking the royal capital's roads by putting them into Storage.
Doing them all is troublesome as expected, so I prioritize the paths people use for evacuation like the main road and parks.
There are places that have caved-in, so I contact the prime minister who's dealing with the royal capital to prioritize dispatching earth magicians there.
Now the supply cart units of soldiers and the knights who are doing disaster relief and victims aid should be able to move.

Lastly, I collect the corpses, and leave the memorial service for them to the neighboring inhabitants.

I check on the menu's memo if I left anything.
Alright, no problem. What hero Nanashi should do in the royal capital is complete.

And then I go gather around 202 life magicians and 11 priests from the neighboring cities before the daybreak.
I had got the king in the royal castle to issue a letter of authorization beforehand, so I was able to recruit the people from the local viceroys and governors without any problem.
Of course, I'm only able to gather these people so fast in such a time probably because of transporting by teleportation, and the 10 gold coins reward for each of them.
I want to scout some of these people to Echigoya, so I've instructed Porina the workshop manager and Nell the life magician to check the appropriate ones.

I let them stay in the appendix dorm of Echigoya Workshop, I've gathered them in order to sustain sanitation of the people who have lost their houses during this incident.
Being covered in mud on top of being hungry and tired, they should feel at the bottom now.

I don't need to supply the food, the king has released the emergency savings of the treasury and mobilized the prime minister, the generals, the supply cart units, and the lower bureaucrats and officials.
With this, there are only rebuilding and holding funeral services for the victims left to do.

The dance party tonight is probably still going to be held in order to show the dignity of the kingdom toward foreign countries.
It's the big moment for our girls, so I'd like to be able to enjoy it without anxiety in the future.

....Still, I'm tired.

With the rising morning sun behind me, I teleport back to Pendragon Mansion where everyone is sleeping.

Part 30 - The Dance Party at the Royal Castle

Satou's here. In battle manga where battles come one after another, I feel that the scenes of everyday life are simply intermezzo. However, when I'm put into the situation myself, I become wanting to refrain from battles and rest in a peaceful place.

◇

"Ten-chan, I'm fallinggggggg~~"

While Mito was leaving such scream, the heavenly dragon returned to Fujisan Mountains as if fleeing.
Judging from the luminous points on the map, it seems Mito and Homonculus Ten-chan are with her too.

If they don't come here until we're about to leave the Royal Capital, I'm going to Fujisan Mountains to meet Mito myself.

....Oh right, I forgot to collect the scales dropped by the heavenly dragon.
I don't mind leaving them there, but if it caused some weird gold rush uproar, the local farmers would be troubled. I'll go quickly collect them.

◇

Fuffufu~n, so I hum while teleporting back to Pendragon Mansion.
Actually, when I was collecting the scales, a call from Aze-san who was worried about me came through [World Phone].

--The worried Aze-san was cute too.

The girls seem to be still asleep, so I change to my everyday clothing and go downstairs.
There, the commuting servants have gathered in full force.

"""Good morning, Master."""
"Ah, morning."

I reply their sharp morning greeting, and tell the old butler that it's fine for them to take a day off on their houses since it's after the incident yesterday.

"I am very thankful for your consideration--"

According to the old butler, the houses of the commuting servants are all fine.

A blue luminous point that signifies my friend are reflected on my radar.
I instruct the old butler to let the girls sleeping on the second floor until they wake up themselves and go toward the entrance hall.

"Master, there is a visitor for you."

"Satou-san, good morning."

Coming from the entranceway, the maid-san guides Sera-san who's wearing priestess clothing to the room.
I'm amazed that Duke Oyugock and his retainers let her go out even though it's after such incident.

"Good morning, Sera-san. Has anything happened for you to be this early?"
"I'm sorry for coming so early. Satou-san, actually I have something to ask you--"

Sera who was having a bit of hard time asking, asked me to accompany her inspecting the city.

Of course it's not a pleasure trip, but to heal people who are seriously injured in the royal capital.
The people of royal capital have been completely healed by Nanashi though, but I can't say it as Satou.

Putting that aside, even without asking me Sera has four knights accompanying her who've followed her to my mansion.
When I check about them to Sera, they are assigned as a condition if she wants to go outside the noble street by Duke Oyugock, and they are to mobilize with me.

If you only hear that part, it sounds as if Duke Oyugock is trying to make Sera be together with me, but in actuality if I go with her, Liza who's an equal match to a Shiga Eight Swords and the others would surely also go along, that must be his hidden plan.

I readily consent to Sera's request, and go around the royal capital while receiving appraising glances from the female escort knights.

◇

"Even though there are so much damage, there doesn't seem to be anyone injured isn't it."
"Yes, that seems to be so--"

I nod at Sera who looks perplexed.

This neighborhood is the wealthy area, so golems, slaves, and servant-like men are gathered to remove the debris and such.
I also catch sights of magic soldiers and magicians wearing robes repairing the caved-in road.

While looking at them at a glance, we pass through the wealthy area and enter the general citizen area.

I look at the surrounding, and even though it hasn't even been two hours since the daybreak, the citizens have begun cooperating to clear up the collapsed buildings.
I don't see many golems and magicians over here.

Even though we're just here to inspect them, the citizens who noticed us stop their work and fall prostrate, so we continue moving while inspecting as much as possible so that we won't get in the way.

"Hime-sama, even though the surrounding houses are destroyed to such degrees, there isn't a single debris on the road."
"Yes, the military engineers of the royal capital are excellent aren't they."

One of the escort knights talks to Sera like she's in awe while advancing the horses.
The military engineers are certainly excellent, but these are my works. As expected, without cheat, the royal capital lacks the man power needed to remove the debris two hours after the incident.

I also catch sights of life magicians hired by Echigoya Firm cleaning the citizens' dirt, and giving food in the public park.
The housewives from the neighborhood seem to be helping too.

Since there are some people who look dead tired nearby the public park, Sera gets down from the horse and call them.

"Are you feeling unwell?"
"N-no, priestess-sama. These people are the people who have been saved from under the debris--"

A nearby old woman who's fallen prostrate tells Sera that they're just sleeping from exhaustion.

"Hero-sama saved my grandchildren who were trapped under the debris."

After hearing the old woman, the people on the surrounding also lift up their head and each begins to boast about hero.

"I was saved from the monster by Hero-sama's magic."
"It sure was amazing. From somewhere far away his figure couldn't even be seen, several hundreds magic arrows defeated the monsters, that even the knights had trouble in a blink of an eye."
"I had got injury big enough my arm was almost torn off, but the golden armor Hero-sama healed it fer' me."

--It's ticklish, so please stop there.

"I'm able to live on thanks to Hero Nanashi-sama."

When the surrounding people see the old woman putting her hands together and praying, they also began to pray, namu namu, too.

....Like I said, please stop with the praying.

Unable to endure any longer, I urged Sera to leave the park, and headed toward the low income people area this time.

As we advance the road, the people gradually look more disorderly.
The crowding nearby the square where there's a food distribution is particularly bad. There's a food distribution too in the general citizen area, but it's on the verge of becoming a riot here.
They don't line up, cut each other's line, and have fist fight with every little thing.
The expression of Sera who's disconnected with violence begins to cloud when she sees such scene.

--CLAP.

I stop the noise in the square with the sound of my clapping palm.
The secret is to create Magic Edge right before they hit.

"O-oy, aren't those nobles-sama."
"There are knights-sama too."

People who have begun to notice us prostate themselves one by one.
It would have been over with [What, it's just a noble huh] if this were in Labyrinth City, but it became this period-drama-like since nobles from big family tend to strut around, and they can easily dispose of people they deem rude.

"Everyone, the food has been prepared by the King, it's enough for everyone's share. Please act orderly befitting of Shiga Kingdom people."

Sera speaks to the citizens with a dignified smile.

"Oy, the heck is 'orderly'?"
"Dunno. Rather than that, what does 'befitting' mean?"

I picked up such conversation with my Attentive Ears skill.
Nevertheless, it seems the rough nuance has been transmitted, the people who are taken aback with Sera's smile, start to form lines as instructed by the officials who are distributing the food.

We wave our hands to the officials who are bowing toward us, and then we set out to return, closing the royal capital inspection.

◇

I part with Sera in front of Duke Oyugock's mansion that's next to the royal castle, and stop by the royal castle's guest house where Baron Muno and the others are staying.
I'm relieved that there's no victim in the baron house except a maid who fell down the stair in panic.

Lady Karina seemed to visit us during my absence, but she didn't seem to have any particular

business with me.
She was probably checking the well-being of our girls.[1]

I finish lunch with everyone quickly and hasten everyone to begin the preparation for the evening party early.
I'm the lowest class of noble, so I have to enter the venue before upper ranking nobles.
The party begins after sunset, but it seems we need to enter the venue one hour before.

While everyone is finishing their preparation, I become Nanashi to meet the king and the prime minister in the royal castle.
When I showed up my face in the king's office, both of them thanked me so vigorously like they'd fall prostrate many many times.
It was beginning to become annoying along the way, so I forcefully interrupted and began my true objective coming here--I told them the details of the incident and the true identity of the black lines.

Both of them were shocked but it seemed they knew that I was not an ordinary existence from the reports of their retainers, so they believed it relatively easy.

"Partial summoning of Demong God...."
"Yeah, that's why I'll have to seclude myself in the forbidden library."
"Certainly. We will prepare an excellent librarian, so please order that person if you need necessary documents."
"Thankies."

Searching things seem like it'll be fun if it's with a 'tsun' female knight.

After I've finished my report, I ask them about the treatment of the incident's criminals.
All remnants of [Light of Liberty] and [Wings of Liberty] are to be publicly executed after the Kingdom Conference. The noble who provided the base for [Light of Liberty] is condemned the crime of treason, and every family members are to be executed--

"Are the young children too?"
"No. In accordance of the law enacted by Na-, Ancient King-sama, children who are 10 years old and younger are to spend the rest of their life in the monastery located at the foot of Fujisan Mountains."

I see, that law sounds like what that guy those days would insist enacting.

Since I've understood, the prime minister continues talking about the treatment of the other people.
As for other nobles who cooperated with that noble, they'll be treated with various punishments depending on the degree of their cooperation, ranging from the family head's execution, to fine penalty.
The temple knight who attacked the Shiga Eight Swords seem to be dispatched by a Cardinal who transferred from Holy Kingdom Parion at the continent's west, but that guy seemed to have escaped by taking advantage of the confusion during the incident.

All people connected with Holy Kingdom Parion are confined under the castle under the pretext of sheltering them.

And, about the carefree occult group, "Wind of Freedom", their members aren't free of blame, several members who did radical speech and conducts are to be punished lightly as a warning.

◇

"Ja, Ja~n!"
"Ja~n?"
"Ja jan nanodesu!"

While I was relaxing in Pendragon Mansion's living room after finishing the general affairs, Arisa, Tama, and Pochi appeared to show off their dresses while saying those things.

Simply put, their dresses are Cinderella-like.
There are frames called panniers inside, upping the volumes of the skirts. The big ribbons on both sides are cute.
The three are wearing matching dresses with the color as the only difference. Arisa's is white, Pochi's is yellow, Tama's is pink.

The gems on the circlets on their foreheads are also matching each of their dress. Every one of them is a different colored diamond, I've got a hard time making them in fake brilliant cut.
Holy sword Durandal was quite the achiever during the process.
Holy swords really cut well aren't they.

"Everyone looks great."
"Dehehee~"
"Wa~i"
"Nanodesu!"

When I praise the three, they're twirling in their places, expressing their joy.
The swelling skirts look like spinning tops.

"Master, requesting inspection of new equipment."
"Nana-sama, you're wonderful."
"Masita, Nana-sama's dress, praise praise?"
"Master, I really should have, with armor...."

Next, Nana and Liza entered the room.
Nana who leads Shiro and Crow looks somehow proud while still being expressionless. We can't take the two children along so they're wearing their everyday wears.

It's Liza's second time in dress after the banquet yesterday, but it seems she's still not used to skirt.
Liza's dress today is more showy than yesterday.
Several thin clothes cover her chest area, retaining Liza's sharpness while displaying woman-

like brilliance.

On that point, Nana's dress lack such ingenuity. It's a normal design with emphasized breasts valley. I just had to be careful so that it wouldn't be vulgar. The bra top is sewed on the dress, so her back line is exposed magnificently.

Liza's dress uses deep blue color, while Nana uses red color fabric.

"It suits you two quite well. Liza, your collar is in disarray. Come here, I'll fix it for you."
"T-thank you very much, Master."

Maybe they're envious to see me fixing Liza's collar, Arisa and the others are trying to disarrange their dresses, but it's not happening since only Liza's dress has collar.

"Master, I'm sorry to have kept you waiting."
"Satou."

The last ones to enter the room is Lulu and Mia.
My eyes are captivated by Lulu in white dress. Lulu who's smiling sweetly is attractive enough to almost make me fall in love.

"Mwu."

Maybe because I was fascinated with Lulu, Mia sulked and kicked my lower leg.

"Sorry sorry, you two look very cute."

Mia's dress is of elvish plant-like taste.
Several transparent cloth that look like leaves are stacked to paint green gradation, and a blue rose-like decoration goes from her left waist to her right shoulder.
I think there was three-dimensional way of sewing in the former world, but since I didn't know the way to do it, I reinforced it with thin mithril wires.

Lulu's dress is a neat wedding-dress like white dress.
At first glance, it looks pure white, but since there are embroidery made with special Adamantite threads, the bottom has chandelier-like illumination, it draws glittering pattern as a surprise.
Of course it's a secret to Lulu.

In addition, I've incorporated the world tree's branch as the lining and weaved fiber made of the whale's beard on every dress, so the defensive power is authentic.

◇

Riding two wagons, we arrived at the guest house inside the royal castle.
This pavilion seems to be used only during the dance party.

Going to the annex from the main building, we head to the first floor of the annex, the

venue for lower class nobles. It seems the venue for the upper class nobles is the second floor of the main building, while the first floor being used for their guards and followers to stand by.

After getting off the rotary wagon, we walk on the blue carpet spread on the hallway toward the venue.

"Are those mithril explorers?"
"Lizardkin, Dogkin, Catkin, oh my, even Elf-sama is there."
"A group leads by a black-haired boy-- So those are Pendragon the『Woundless』!"

I heard such things from a group of lower class nobles who are gossiping around.
It's not particularly a bad gossip, so I bow and smile radiantly when we pass them.

The venue is large enough for around 300 people to dance all at once.
Moreover, when I look closer, there are two rooms that are as wide connected to this.
There are a lot of lower class nobles, so these much space are probably needed.

"Prety~?"
"There's a lot of chandeliers nanodesu."
"It's pretty so I praise."

Tama, Pochi, Nana look up many chandeliers illuminating the venue and admire it.

"Those don't seem to use candles, I wonder if all of those are magic tools?"
"That seems to be the case."

Arisa asked, so I appraised them, and understood that they were magic tools that made use of Light Drops.
There are also ventilation magic tools on the four corners of the room.
As expected of a venue of a large country, it seems there are also crime prevention magic tools installed too.

"It's really gorgeous. I feel that I'm out-of-place."
"That's not true. Liza is a splendid lady you know."

I tell Liza who's being worried that it's not a flattery, it comes from my true feeling.
In actuality, among the nobles in this floor, about 5% of them aren't humans. Most of them are lifetime honorary chevaliers, but there are also those who hold honorary baron pedigree.

"You too Lulu, relax your shoulders a bit."
"B-but. Even if a girl like me dresses up...."

Even though it's dormant lately, Lulu's inferiority complex resurfaces after coming to a showy stage.
From my point of view, she's the most lovely and beautiful in this place, having her beauty shadowed by her inferiority complex is too wasteful.

Right then, the orchestra preparation is complete, and relaxing tune starts to fill the floor.
Even though the host hasn't opened the meeting, some impatient couples have started to dance while matching the tune.
Lulu quietly leaks envious sigh while seeing the dancing couples.

"Young lady, would you like to dance with me?"

I present my hand to Lulu, and ask her to dance with me with slightly pompous tone.

"U-um.... I-if you're fine with me."

Lulu timidly takes my hand, and then I escort her to the open space where the couples are dancing.
Matching the relaxing music, we dance like wandering fish.
At first Lulu was tense trying not to fail, but she was diffused after seeing me purposely took some wrong steps, and it became a relaxing dance.
It was worth clowning around.

The two of us spin and dance, enjoying the peaceful night.
More than fighting demons, really, I'm more suited to this kind of relaxing time.

We continued dancing for several tunes until Lulu was satisfied.

Furthermore, when we returned to where everyone was after finishing the dance, they looked at me as if wanting to dance, so I asked them to be my partner in turns.

"Arisa, you're fine with not dancing?"
"Fuhfuhn, the star performer adorns the closing performance you know!"

I heard Arisa bluffing like that with my Attentive Ears skill.
And, as if that was a flag, blue luminous point besides our girls reflected on the radar....

--The night of dance party seems going to be long.

1. Reminder that Satou's expression of "Our girls" can be interpreted as "My family's children".

Intermission: New Year Dish

"Lulu Onee-sama, I earnestly implore you."

....What should I do, Arisa is acting even stranger than usual.

"Do you want something you'd like to have for the evening meal?"
"Banba~gwu~?"
"Leaving out the whale karage is hard too nodesu."

It was Pochi-chan and Tama-chan coming from behind Arisa who answered my question.
Liza-san would have surely requested yakitori.
Nana-san loves kids' lunch.
Mia-chan would be curry I think?

"Luluu~"
"Ah, I'm sorry, Arisa."

I inadvertently forgot about Arisa as my consciousness wandered about dinner.

"So, what is your request? Don't be something too strange or something that Master dislikes okay?"
"Master won't dislike it mon."

Arisa sulked like a child, turning her face the other way with swelling cheeks.
She rarely sulks like this.

"Please Arisa, won't you talk to Onee-chan?"
"....Okay."

When I matched our eyes and asked her, Arisa sheepishly nodded.
--Ah, it's been a while since I feel like an older sister.

◇

"New year dish? What kind of dish is it?"

Arisa was asking a dish called [New Year Dish].
However, I've never heard something like that.

"It's the dish from Master's hometown."
"Then let's ask the way to make it from Master--"
"No!"

--I thought of asking Master, but Arisa stopped me with both her arms spread open.

"Why can't we?"
"We're always getting surprises from Master, so I want to give him some surprise present

sometimes."
"Okay. Leave it to Onee-chan."
"Un, I love you Lulu!"

Arara, it's back to 'Lulu' already.
It's unfortunate, but I won't be able to calm down if she keeps calling me Onee-sama, so it might be alright once in a while.

I rolled my sleeves and then went to the kitchen.

However, the real problem was from here....

◇

"Seaweed roll, fish omelet roll, eel roll..."
"Are they all dish with roll?"

I tilted my head in puzzlement, and then Arisa denied with a strange word, "Nein."
Apparently, she doesn't remember the dish's name.

"U~n, I usually only ate them, so I can't remember the name. You boil carrot, taro, lotus root, and kuwai, there are also sliced kamaboko and ham I think."

Arisa is telling me about it too haphazardly, I can't imagine what kind of dish is it.
I wonder if it's like Nabe where you put many things inside?

"Oops, I mustn't forget, black soy bean and Kurikinton! Sweetened boiled sweet potatoes are also the staple aren't they."

....Even if you tell me that it's the staple.
Were those just now for the dessert after dinner?

"Right, right, prawns! Boiled prawns on boudara sea bream served whole! And then, and then, herring roe! There must be herring roe after all. With katsuboshi on it, you put a biit of soy sauce.... U~n, it's unbearable~"

Arisa is grinning widely like when she's fantasizing about Master.

"It's totally unbearable nodesu."
"Unbear-bear~"

Pochi-chan and Tama-chan who imagined the dish from Arisa's words have their mouths open wide like they'll drool.

"So, do you know how to make them?"
"Abbsolutely not."
"Arisa?"
"....Can't Lulu's transcendental cooking skill do something about it?"

Oh you Arisa. She's way too unreasonable.

"I'm not Master, so it's impossible. Since the eels are sold in the market, I think we can do something about it if you tell what kind of taste the boiled vegetables should be like."
"Really?! Asxpected of Lulu. The favorite pupil of the phantom chef!"
"Even if you praise me. I think we can substitute the prawn with river shrimp or crayfish, but I don't think we can get our hands on the sea bream. We have katsuboshi and soy sauce in stock, but what is herring roe?"

To my question, Arisa crosses her arms and frowns.

"Something that has eggs in it. Something that's yellow, lumpy and delicious!"

I waited for Arisa's explanation to continue, but Arisa just kept crossing her arms and breathing roughly.

"U~n, I don't think I've ever seen them even in the royal capital's and the trade city's marketplaces. If I only know the kind of fish it is, I could ask the marketplace people to get it..."
"Then can't we just ask the fish dealer old man at the marketplace for that?"
"Right. That might be good."

Arisa and I, with Pochi-chan and Tama-chan as the guards, went to the royal capital's marketplace.
Come to think of it, why and what are the rolled ingredients for seaweed roll, fish omelet roll, and eel roll I wonder.

◇

"I could get ya river fish, dried and smoked cods, octopus and river shrimp, but sea fish are impossible. Even if an Item Box-holder merchant runs on the fastest horse, it's absolutely impossible to keep them fresh."

The old man of the best wholesale fish dealer in the royal capital told us so when we asked him.

"Hey~, can't you do something somehow?"
"Like I said it's impossible. A falconkin airmail man can make a round trip to the trade city in one day, but there's no way you're paying 10 gold coins to buy fish right?"

The pocket money I got from Master whenever we return from the labyrinth is quite enough.
However, using it like this feels wasteful.

"Oh right, I've got some sakura salmon if ye' like? I don't know no herring ore, but the eggs of sakura salmon have this popping sensation, I recommend them y'know?"

The fish dealer old man shows a sakura salmon that's as long as Pochi-chan, trying to sell it.

The sakura salmon's eggs are scarlet colored aggregation of grains.

"It's salmon roe! Pouring this on rice and then eating them is delish ain't it~"
"Oh, lil' lady, you come from seaside? There aren't many people who eat this 'round here. I'll give them free of charge, so spread it around the people around you."
"Le~ave it to me. We have two excellent cooks, I'm going to make royal capital's people crazy about salted salmon roe!"
"How reliable~"

Arisa finds a kindred spirit on the old man, going gahaha together.
....Oh Arisa. I have to instill her more woman-like behavior when we get back.

◇

"Teleporting four people is hard after all."

A few minutes after leaving the marketplace, we've arrived at the hill overlooking the trade city.
Arisa drinks the magic potion with great relish.
The sweet smell is the new peach taste isn't it.

"Now, let's do the last spurt."
"Faighto~"
"Nanodesu!"

After some slight floating sensation, we arrived at the corner of the warehouse block on the verge of the trade city.
This is the warehouse of Echigoya Firm that Master uses whenever he buys fresh fish.

"Now, let's go everyone!"
"Ou~"
"Nanodesu!"

Tama-chan and Pochi-chan answers Arisa's order with Shupin pose, and then we go to the unloading market while they're pulling my hands.

"This is a good sea bream isn't it."
"Huge"
"Big~"
"It seems to be worth eating nanodesu."

Arisa is being too surprised, but a sea fish that's as big as your spread arm should be the norm.

"Young ladies, you have some sharp eyes. That sea bream is three gold coins."

U~n, it's a bit too expensive.
The market price is around four silver coins I think?

"Yes, here's three gold coins."

Arisa quickly paid before I could negotiate.
The unloading market broker-san grins like he's found an easy mark ignorant of the world, but Arisa returns it with an even worse smile, and continues speaking.

"Hey, I have some ingredients I want, is it alright with you?"

Apparently, the gold coins earlier were for information exchange.
In just about a bell-ring long, the broker-san found the ingredients requested by Arisa.

"Found crabs~?"
"There are even lobsters crowding on the plate nodesu."

Tama-chan and Pochi-can found found them to be delicious.
The broker-san even carries them to the warehouse, and then from there on is no problem since we have the magic bag and Arisa's space magic.

The fisherman-san whom we bought the herring roe from taught me the way to cook it, so it seems doable somehow.

◇

"....■■ Infiltrate"

Mia-chan uses cooking magic to shorten the time for the water to soak the black beans.
It's a water magic created by Master, but since it has no use other than for cooking, everyone half-jokingly calls it cooking magic.

"....■■■ Ripen"

Now then, I'm going to leave the processing that take time to Mia-chan, the problem is the fish omelet roll which recipe I don't know.

"Wrong, this is just omelet."

I've made so many kinds, but it never be like how Arisa wants.
I could have gotten precise hint if Master or Liza-san were here at a time like this....

"Keepatit~~"
"True nanodesu. Leave the cleaning up to Pochi and Tama nodesu!"

Tama-chan and Pochi-can who are holding rolled eggs on both their hands are eating the failed ones enthusiastically.

"You won't be able to eat dinner if you eat too much you know?"
"Another stomach~?"
"It's fine as long as the flavor is different nanodesu."

Flavor huh--right! Seasoning!

"Arisa, tells me the seasoning from Master's hometown."
"Uumm, the seasoning is called『Sashisuseso』. Sato (sugar), Shio (salt), Su (vinegar), Se... Se, Seabura (back fat), So, Soysauce--Shoyu!"W

Back fat, that's something I'd have never thought to use as a seasoning.

"Lulu~ This, not it~?"

Tama-chan picked up a small bottle with Mirin inside from among the seasoning in the kitchen.
I tried them all in turns, and it turned out the Mirin that Tama-chan found was the correct answer.

"Right right, this is the flavor! Now Lulu! Let's make the seaweed roll next! Putting herring inside the roll is good, but since we have sakura salmon, let's make sakura salmon seaweed roll!"

--Putting salmon in the seaweed roll?!

The inner part of New Year Dish seems to be quite deep.

It's said that mochi is necessary for New Year Dish, so Pochi-chan and Tama-chan are making mochi on the garden, pound pound.
Mia-chan, Nana-san and the others are also participating, I can hear their cheerful voice.

Let's complete this before Master and Liza-san come back from the banquet and surprise them!
And then, I'll be praised "It's delicious Lulu."!

P-perhaps, he might even say, "The man who makes Lulu his bride is a fortunate man."

While crushing the chestnuts for making Kurikinton, I unconsciously have such delusion.
Tomorrow is the dance party, and the day after tomorrow is the Kingdom Conference.

It's Master's big stage, and there's my Coming-of-age ceremony in the afternoon.
Ehehe~, it's matching with Master.

Feasting, and then congratulating, let's make it a fun new year.
Ufufu, it'll be fun when Master comes back.

SS: Dance Practice

"Fluttering~?"

"Pochi's dress is soft and fluffy too nanodesu."

The dresses that Master has made for us are very beautiful.
Tama is also dancing round and round with Pochi nodesu.

"Pochi, Tama, we're going to Oppai-san's place in the castle, are you coming?"
"Come~"
"Pochi will go too nodesu."

Pochi nods to Arisa. She says that Lulu is also coming.
Pochi hasn't been moving much ever since she comes to to the royal capital, so she wants to do some training with Karina nodesu.

Nana seems to be doing something in the garden. Together with Shiro and Crow too.

We go to Karina's house in the royal castle.
But, Karina wasn't in the lesson room.

"Huh? Karina-sama?"
"She's feeling a bit sick, she's retiring in her bedroom."

Erina shakes her neck while saying, "Gyoukusai ssu."[1]
Pochi wonder if Gyokusai is an egg dish? It sounds a bit delicious nanodesu.

"I see, then everyone start your lesson ahead, I'll motivate Karina-sama for a bit."

Arisa said so and then left the room.
Pochi also wanted to go with her, but she said, "It's maidens talk, so leave us two alone", and leave me in the room nodesu.

"Tama is a maiden too~?"
"Even Pochi is a maiden nanodesu."
"N, maiden."

We have to firmly protest here!
Lulu too, it's not the time to giggle nodesuyo?

However, since a mansion's maid came to the room bringing snacks, we're going to protest after eating the snacks nodesu.
You cannot protest with a hungry stomach nodesuyo.

◇

"Fulla~"
"It was delicious nodesu."
"N, satisfied."

Eating snack is happiness.
Pochi can't make light of the mansion's maid skill nodesu.

"I wonder if it uses ginger as the secret ingredient? If you just decrease it a bit more, remove the alcohol and add a drop of brandy, it should taste better. I should try it when we get back."

....Lulu's monologues sounds so tender to Pochi's ears like a lullaby nodesu.

◇

"Hey Pochi. The lesson is starting."

Arisa woke Pochi up, swoosh swoosh.
Hau, Pochi's stomach was full, making her fell asleep nodesu.

Karina is standing with enough fighting spirit beside Arisa.
Her face is like when Pochi and the others challenged the [Floormaster] nodesu.

"I'll display the best dance and make the gazes of the surrounding men gather to me. And then, I'll make Satou regret and be jealous desuwa. A flower is chased by men. I won't become a cheap woman who chase after men desuwa."

Pochi completely doesn't understand what Karina is saying, but Pochi loves doing chasing.
Da da da, da so Pochi chases and then enters the burrowing hole entirely, it's really fun nanodesu.

Tama and Pochi leans our heads to each other.

"Mia, music start."
"Nn."

Karina dances with Lulu.
The two's foot-stepping are wonderful nanodesu. Pochi should train her foot techniques too nanodesu.

Dancing and spinning together with Tama.

"Good good, keep it up!"

Arisa is encouraging everyone with folded arms.

However, Pochi can't step her partner's feet as well as Karina and Lulu.
Tama's evasion is amazing nodesu.

However, Master's evasion is even more amazing nodesu.
Someday, Pochi will show Master that she can dance well enough to step on her partner's feet like Karina and Lulu nodesu!

--However, is it alright for Arisa not to practice dancing nodesu?

1. Got your confession completely rejected

SS: Arisa and Intrigue

"Master, about Lulu's coming-of-age celebration, which do you think is better, white or black? Ah, there's red too."

Arisa asked while showing me some silk cloth.

"Which you said, doesn't white suits Lulu the best?"
"Right isn't it. Pure white is nice after all."

It'll looks good with Lulu's black hair--

--Wait, pure white? The fact that she didn't just say white feels a bit off.

"Wait."
"What?"

I halt Arisa.

"There are two things I want to ask you."
"My secret is expensive you know?"

I ignore Arisa who's posing like a strange evil woman, and ask her what I need to ask.

"You said coming-of-age celebration, is it near the time for Lulu's birthday?"
"Ara? I didn't tell you? There aren't many countries that celebrate birthdays here. Most only celebrate at ages seven and fifteen during new year."

Fumu.... I confirm the date on my Menu.
It's 28th October right now, so it's about two months left huh. With this much time, I should be able to create a long-sleeved kimono.
Arisa continues speaking as if sneering me who's relieved.

"Since one year is 10 months, it's the day after tomorrow."

--Wha!

Come to think of it, Arisa did tell me that one year is 10 months once.

"....Two days left huh."
"Don't tell me, you really haven't prepared anything?"

I have the best clothes prepared for when Lulu won the cooking tournament, but I feel that wearing Chinese dress for her coming-of-age ceremony is not good.
She would likely cry if I gave her the bunny suit I made for Arisa's joke....

--Think! Satou!

While skimming the items in my Storage, I imagine what kind of item I should make.

--Show me the power of that uselessly high INT!

Something that would make women happy are sweets, ornaments and cosmetics, and also a trip huh.

There's nothing special with sweets.
Accessories too, I've always given her the trial products whenever I make dresses and maid uniform, so it'll feel too little too late.
A tiara with a lot of philosopher's stones...is not a good idea. Gift isn't about the amount of money.

I have several repertoires regarding cosmetics, but with Lulu's beauty it'd harm it instead.
Then maybe something like perfume--right, a lipstick might be good.

When my childhood friend asked me a birthday present, she was really happy when I randomly give her a lipstick.
I was running out of money at that time, so I bought the lipstick from a hundred-yen store, I felt like running away when I saw my childhood friend dancing in joy from the cheap lipstick I gave, but I remember giving her a proper lipstick after I got the earnings from my part-time job later on.

"I'll present her a lipstick."
"Ah, she might be pleased with that. I'll even overlook it if I see it on Master's lips."

Arisa said so while laughing amorously.
....She said that in case of Lulu kissing me right? I don't have a hobby of dressing as a girl you know?

--Huh? Arisa asked me about the color just now, can she even make a kimono in two days?
I thought so and confirmed to Arisa.

"Ah, of course it's for battle underwear! Does Master like string for the side? Or maybe you're in lace-faction?"

After spanking Arisa who laughed guhehe, turned out the white cloth from earlier was for the half-finished dress for Lulu.
She's using unraveled whale beard which is used for dress armor for the lining cloth, so the defensive power is way higher than normal metal armor.

In addition, since it could be sexual harassment, I checked if Arisa really made a battle underwear.

....On later days, Lulu who used the lipstick I gave her while wearing the white dress was really wonderful.

The offensive power is really too high, enough to make me feel dizzy.
It was dazzling enough that I would have proposed her here and then if it wasn't for Aze-san.

"It's my turn in three years. At that time, you have to absolutely, absolutely make a face like just now!"

Arisa who crossed her arms while posing dauntingly roughly breathed, muhhaa, and declared so.
Toward Arisa's reckless objective that seems like a knight challenging a windmill, I cheer for her only in my mind.

--Do your best, Arisa.

SS: Lulu and Ingredients Shopping

"Huh? Lulu, you sure are early."

"Good morning, Master."

I stop my hands from changing clothes, and greet Master.
Even though Master said I'm early, Master wasn't in the bed when I woke up in the middle of the night, so maybe he didn't sleep tonight too.

I can't imagine Master collapsing from overworking, but even my mother collapsed suddenly.
It might be presumptuous of me, but I harden my heart, I must tell Master to get some sleep!

"Master--"
"Lulu, you're in the middle of changing right? I'm troubled where to look, so can you at least put your underwear?"

--Eh?

Underwear?

I move my line of sight awkwardly to below.

That is, just now, the one I was trying to wear, brassiere.

I cover my breasts and squat on the floor.
Ah, my face is hot.

To let Master see the body of an ugly girl like me.... I've polluted his eyes.

"I-I'm sorry. To show such a thing to Master."
"Ah, sorry. My reaction was late due to my slightly lack of sleep. Moreover, it was a sight for sore eyes, so there's no need for you to apologize."

Master who had turned his body the other way gently said so.

I put up the brassiere in a hurry. It seems the bust-up exercise has shown its effect recently, they've grown bigger and the brassiere size becomes wrong.
I have to ask Arisa to adjust the size next time.

"Lulu give this package to Arisa when she's woken up. It's dangerous, so be careful about the children opening the package okay."
"Yes, I understand."

I put the package from Master into my own magic bag temporarily.

I want to put it in Arisa's magic bag, but it can't be helped since you can only put and take out things from your own magic bag.

Master waves his hand to me and then leaves the room.

--Ah! Maybe he was hungry.
There's still some time before the commuting maids come, so I have to make it!

I grab the apron in a hurry and chase after Master.

◇

"Is it alright with just plum rice porridge?"
"Yeah, it's nice for the stomach, and above all, Lulu's cooking is delicious."

Ehehehee, I got praised.

"Right, there's a morning market opening near the royal capital's gate during this hour, do you want to see it?"

For Master's invitation, I check the clock that Master's made hung on the wall.
There's still two hours before everyone wakes up--it's alright isn't it?

"Yes! I want to go."
"Then we'll be going after I've finished eating this, so fix your clothes okay."

--Eh?

Aaaa..... I've done it again.
To have only my underwear under the apron, there's a limit to being improper.
Like this, I'm just a female pervert.

While reflecting on it, I went back to my room in a hurry to change.

◇

"As one would expect of the royal capital, there's an abundance of goods huh."
"Yes! It makes it hard to choose."

There's a lot of seasoning, there's a lot of ingredients I've never seen, just thinking how to use them makes me feel giddy.
If possible I'd love to study cooking together with Master just like it was before we went to the elf hometown.... Such thing is too luxurious for me.

"Ah, Master, although they're small, aren't those tuna?"
"It's true, let's go see it Lulu."

Master pulled my hand while smiling happily.
Oh Master, he really likes tuna.

I hold my cheeks with the unconnected hand so that it won't loosen, and enjoy the brief happiness.

◇

After we've finished the shopping, I'm sitting together with Master on a bench next to a stall, enjoying some light meal.
Maybe because I've walked a lot, the fragrance of the soba that's just been milled stimulates my appetite.

"It's the first time I've eaten soba made of buckwheat dough, but it's surprisingly delicious isn't it."
"Yes. It's not firm like the soba I ate before, but this is delicious too."

It's the first for me, but it seems it's the first too for Master who has extensive knowledge.

It seems there's still a lot of dish unknown to me in Royal Capital.
The money I received in the Labyrinth City has accumulated so much I don't know if it'll ever be used up, so it might be good to eat out at various places.
I won't ask something luxurious like wanting it to be together with Master.
Exploring a lot of delicious shops with everyone, it'll be fun.

Eating the local dishes in various regions, and then next time, I'll be treating those dishes to someone else in another region.
Recently, I sometimes dream like that.

It might be an unreachable dream with this slave body, but someday I'll save enough money and make it a reality.

And then, at that time, beside me will be--.

SS: Tama and Bad People Suppression

"Night strolling~?"

Tama found Master who was going out, so it's an emergency capture nano.
I mean, Arisa and Mia asked me.

"Ah, you found me. Keep it a secret from everyone okay?"
"Aye"

Master puts Wing Boots on Tama, and then we go together.

Mia and Arisa said, "Catch Master when he's going out alone."
But, right now he's with Tama, so it's alright.

--It's alright right?

From on top of the neighboring mansion, Tama flies pyo~n departing!
Master's black mantle is fluttering, he looks so happy. The white mask is also laughing.

Tama can't fly well, so Master holds her in his arms.

"To where~?"
"A bit more--look, it's over there."

We land at the top of a spire with a thump.
Even though the mantle is shaken by the wind, Master doesn't shakes even an inch.

--As expected, nano.

"Look there, I'm going to suppress those bad people."
"Bad people~?"

When Tama looks at the place Master is pointing at, there are people in black clothing full of weapons lurking in the back alley.

"It seems they're going to attack the homes of our employees--wait, we can talk about that later."

Master comes before Tama's face.
When you stare so hard, it's embarrassing, nyan.

"Listen now, they are far weaker than the labyrinth monsters, so don't forget to hold back okay."
"Aye!"

Tama replies with shutan pose.

"Now, let's start the ninja time."

Tama nods to answer Master.
I mean, Ninjas don't talk.

While holding Tama, Master lands in front of the black clothed people.

"Who the hell are you!"
"Your enemies."

Tama hides behind the shadow as soon as we land.

"What? The pink lump disappears?"
"Rather than that, kill this suspicious mask!"
""""Ou!""""

The black-clothed people attack Master all at once.
Tama cannot go help.

I mean, there is no need.

--Ammazing!

Master increases to six, and then attack the black-clothed people who're attacking from six directions!
Every one of them fell to the floor without even having time to swing their swords.

Tama has to learn it too!
I mean, she's a ninja.

◇

Tama will get scolded if she just watches. She has to work too--

"It's noisy on that side."
"Maybe they got found out by the guards."
"Even if it's just us, let's quickly plunder, kill and escape."
"Right."

Discovered bad people.
Shuriken, shu, shu, shu~?

--Huh?

"Hmph, you seem to be quite skillful, but it's not enough against this great me who's an ex-Red Iron ya'know?"

Tama held back too much.
Uncle-san attacked with a great axe.

Iai flash nano.
When a Ninja 'shupan', draws, and then 'shushut', sheaths, something like a great axe is cut in two.

"Wo, what? Red blade flew?"

Unyu, Magic Edge Cannon came out.
--Ah, Master catches the Magic Edge Cannon on the other side.

Tama waves her hand, thank you Master.

Huh? But wasn't Master fighting over there?
When she turns around, Master is standing over there too.

Afterimage! Arisa often said, "That's an afterimage!" when she played as demon king nyan!
As expected of Tama's master.

"Magic weapons huh. You cheater!"

Uncle-san is angry, punpun.

Tama is not a cheater.
Besides, the one saying cheater is the cheater themselves nano.

I mean, Ninjas are an ally of justice.

Tama too, will afterimage.

"Kuh, Twinkling Movement huh!"

Uncle-san takes some distance while blocking the kunai with his axe.
U~n, it's a bit wrong.

While evading the daggers thrown around by Uncle-san, Tama sees Master who's fighting over there.

U~n, it's difficult.
Does Tama move slightly like, gyun, maybe~?

"Tsk, they were easily evaded, then how about this! 『Flame』"

Uncle-san points a short wand with fire stone here.
A small fireball comes flying.

It's useless nyan.
If Tama just, cut-this-one--done.

"WHAT! This guy cut a magic!"

Next is Tama's turn.

Moving slightly, like, gyun.

"Wha, this guy increased?!"

Looks like it's a success.
But, Tama hit Uncle-san's stomach too enthusiastically.

Uncle-san who spurted blood like he was dying got healed by Master's magic.
Master, thank you nano.

"Looks like Tama has cleaned up her part too. The guards seem to be coming here, let's go back after I've given these guys to them."
"Aye!"

After Master give the bad people to the guward people, we return to the mansion.
We remove our disguises along the way and eat [Yonakisoba] on a stall that sounds [pipuu].

"Who would've thought that there's a ramen stall here."
"Delish~"

Tama wants to eat [Yonakisoba] with Pochi and everyone next time.

"That's right, let's go with Pochi and the others next time."
"Aye!"

Therefore, so happy from Master's words, Tama answers with energetic shutan pose.

Intermission: New Year Greeting

"Wish you a happy new year."

"Satou! W-wish you a happy new year!"

Receiving my surprise happy new year greeting, Aze-san greeted back like she was surprised.

Making use of the time difference between the royal capital and Boruenan countryside, I came to Boruenan to do happy new year greeting.
I had prepared the pretext of using the new Unique Skill [Unit Arrangement], but everyone was fast asleep since they were making merry until late at night during the evening party and the after party yesterday.

Today Aze-san is even cuter than usual.
No, I should say that that she's beautiful on her miko attire huh.

"I like your normal clothes, but that miko attire is also lovely isn't it."
"T-thank yu--"

She was saying the last part embarrassingly and sheepishly I couldn't hear it, but since I was able to see blushing Aze-san, I deemed it good.

"Are you not using the little girl illusion today?"
"T-that's! I-it's not like that! That's--"

When I was playing around with Aze-san, Lua-san came in wearing miko attire.

"Ara, Satou-san. Is it fine for you to be away from Shiga Kingdom already?"
"Yes, fortunately."

I had told them about the greater demon and the summoned part of Demon God ahead with [Telephone] magic.

"It's about time for the ceremony, let's go to the world tree."
"Satou will also come right?"
"Yes, of course I'll be observing."

I came here for that sake after all.
They tell me that they will perform offering dance at the time of sunrise in the observatory of the world tree, so they need to prepare various things.

An altar like the one in Shinto shrines has been prepared in the observatory, and including Aze-san, there are more than 100 miko and diviners preparing things.
The light is put off when everyone has taken their position, the room is wrapped in silence.

When the first sunlight begins to be seen on the faraway horizon, the sound of transverse flute and organ begin to spread.
The 'shan-shan' sound I heard sometimes are probably from the kagura bells the miko and the diviners are carrying.

And then when the sunlight illuminates the observatory, Aze-san who was standing by begins to dance the Kagura Dance with dignified expression.
The other miko starts to dance one after another, while the comforting sound from the diviners fill the altar with solemn atmosphere.

Their movements are accurate as if they've programmed to it.
And yet, they don't look mechanical. Looking from the elves' perspectives, it's probably a dance they've performed for hundreds, thousands of years, so it probably has become as natural as breathing to them.

The dance continues on for about 30 minutes, and I've perfectly recorded it from start to finish.
I'll show it to Mia and the others later.

When I was gazing at the prime and proper mode Aze-san, she seemed to notice me and came over while taking Lua-san along.

"Satou."
"Good work Aze-san. It was a very wonderful dance."

I hand over a fluffy towel to Aze-san.
While looking at her who's wiping her sweat from the side, I ask her the question I've been having in mind.

"Aze-san, I forgot to ask before, but which God was the dance dedicated to?"
"It's to Dragon God-sama."

--Dragon God Akon Kagura?

"D-does the elf revere the Dragon God?"

If that's the case, then I have to confess that I've killed their deity....

"No, it's not like that. Rather, the elves only revere us and the Creator God who created the seven pillar gods."

Oops, some last boss-like name came out of Aze-san's mouth.

"This is the first time I've heard of Creator God--"
"That's only natural. It's a God that came from a far far away world together with the seven pillar gods after all."

Lua-san answered my doubt.

Come to think of it, the same thing was written in the picture book about myth from before.

"It's independent?"
"Yes, about 100 hundred million years have passed since they came to this world, but not even once an oracle came from Creator God. There are many gods who leave their worlds, and that particular God has non-interference policy."

The time span is strange.
Rather, so there are a lot of gods in other worlds huh.

Oops, the story has been diverted.

"But, then why is the dance dedicated to the Dragon God?"
"That's because--"

The thing that Aze-san told me was close to the content of the myth picture book I read before.
As a thank for the Dragon God who welcomed the gods coming to this world, they've been doing the offering dance for generations in the span of 100 million years.

100 million years huh....
Then keeping silent about will be too dishonest of me.

I steeled myself, asked to meet the demi-god mode Aze-san who's linked with the world tree's archive, and confessed that I had killed the Dragon God.

"....to the Dragon God?"

Demi-god mode Aze-san looks perplexed for the first time.

"Apparently, you are not lying."

After a while, she greatly breathes out and turns her tranquil eyes to me.

"Satou, I have been surprised by you so many times, but this is the first time I'm this shocked in the 100 million years after I came to this land."

I wanted to lower my head from her sublime voice, but I psyche myself and stare at the dignified face of demi-god mode Aze-san.

"However, there is no problem if you just merely killed the Dragon God."

——WHAT？

"When the gods had just came to this world, God Zaikuon and God Garleon challenged the Dragon God and got themselves killed, but they were revived in 1000 years time. If it's the Dragon God then it will probably be revived in 100 years."

As expected of God.

Or rather, does that mean it would seek revenge in 100 years?

....Well I guess it's alright. There's no great difference since my life would've ran out in 100 years anyway.

"Fufufu, Satou sure thinks some interesting things."

Oops, demi-god mode Aze-san could read your mind in this room only was it.

"Dragon God hates to lose, but it doesn't mind the method of fighting. If you don't want to fight with force, then you can fight with wits or games."
"--I see."

Then I have to develop PCs and game consoles in the 100 years before the Dragon God gets revived.
Even better, aiming for VR games seems fun too.

"Please let me participate when that happens."
"Yes, of course."

I express my gratitude to demi-god mode Aze-san, and then I get back to the usual tree house together with the usual Aze-san.

◇

"Oh right, I've brought new year dishes since I thought of eating it with everyone."
"Ara, then we have to call Nea."

Lua-san who's followed along with us asks a pixie flying nearby to be a messenger.
Nea-san is an elf cook researcher who bets her life to reproduce the Japanese dishes told by the late hero.

"Hey, Daisaku said that you eat new year dishes with your family, is that true?"
"Yes, that's true."

Of course, you also treat your friends who visit you with the dishes, but most are eaten together with your family right?

"--Is that so."

It seems Aze-san is pleased with my answer, she sits down happily beside me.
There's just enough space for Mia to sit between us.

....You can sit closer you know?

◇

"My! Are those neyyear dishes?"

When I spread the six-tiered food boxes, Nea-san who came from the window with wind magic asked with peculiar pronunciation.

"Happy new year, Nea-san."
"Ara, me of all people--"

Nea-san apologizes for her bad manner.
No no, Nea-san's tension is always like this when it's related to food.

"Satou-san, happy new year. Please take care of me this year too."

Nea-san is keeping appearance like a graceful lady, but her eyes are shining fiery like she's found a prey, scrutinizing the new year dish.

I quietly hands her the recipe collection without any bribe.
She should be able to perfect the "faux" new year dish that I and Lulu made.

"Then let us eat."
"Wa~i"

To Lua-san's signal, Aze-san approved it like a child.
Looks like she's weak to delicious things like usual.

"This omelet is tasty!"
"That one is called datemaki."

I explain the dish simply to Aze-san who stuffs her mouth with the datemaki.
Aze-san is listening happily, "uh-huh", but since she's absorbed in tasting the food, she's probably going to forget it tomorrow.

"Daisaku said. If you shout out your love as you eat datemaki, you'll learn the six-swords style right?"

--Hero Daisaku! Please be more moderate when you play around with Aze-san!

I complained to the late hero in my mind.

"Is this soup a clear soup?"
"That's called Ozouni."
"Eh~. --This mochi! There's red bean paste inside! Ozouni is sweet, I love it."

--Love!

Repeat, please!

"Aze-san, does the Ozouni suits your taste?"
"Yes, it's so sweet I like it very much."

--Like it very much.

I'll compile the voice record from this time, and make it into hearing item for when I feel down.
I want to praise my past self who decided to make not the light-brown miso ozouni that Arisa requested, but the ozouni that Aze-san likes.

Usually Lua-san would have looked like she would vomit sugar, but today it seems she's busy with dishes she's seen for the first time, it doesn't seem she pay any attention to me and Aze-san flirting.

Rather than calling it flirting, it feels more like a relationship between a guest and a waiter, but that's not true.
Subjectivity is important at a time like this.

"The prawns' husks are...."
"If you hold it like this and do this, you can take it off easily you know."
"It's true! As expected of Satou."

While teaching the way to break the sea bream into pieces, I teach Aze-san who's having a hard time with the prawns the way to shell them, we pass the time while talking about various stories.

As I've thought, Visiting Boruenan countryside really heals me.

As the multi-tiered food boxes get emptied, Aze-san mutters "I can't eat anymore" happily while curling on my lap looking satisfied.

I wanted to enjoy this happiness a bit more, but since Arisa contacted me "It's about time to depart for the Kingdom Conference" through [World Phone], I bid my farewell to Aze-san and the others.

I'm going to stock fresh shrimps in the royal capital, and make some shrimp curry.
New year dishes are nice, but curry is also nice isn't it.

Intermission: In the Shadow of the Royal Capital

※ The narrator is a big-wig of the demon lord believers [Light of Liberty]

"This is the artifact entrusted by the previous Earl Bobi."

The thing on top of the cloth that the man presents is a bracelet that looks like it's made from braiding of violet-colored hair.

"Fire Magician-dono, is this really it?"
"Umu, I will even bet the house name of Dasles on it."

It doesn't look like an artifact blessed by Demon God-sama, but we should know whether it's real when we use it.
If it were a fake, this man could just pay with his soul then.

"As for the rewards--"

I leave it to one of my underlings.
This fire magician seeks a certain information as the reward.

"The tigerkin girl is in a district in the slum where they don't let humans in. Important as it may, it would be slightly troubling if fire magician-dono makes a big fuss. Therefore, for our friendship, I have ordered for that girl to be abducted, and get her to fire magician-dono."

The fire magician nods like he's displeased hearing the underling.
I don't know what grudge he has, but to come far from the east, quite the hard work he's gone through.

◇

"....■■■■■■■ Summon Artifact"

In exchange of 100 sacrifices, a black short horn falls on top of the altar.

"So this is『Short Horn』. The demon god-sama's artifact that can sublimate people into demons...."

I was tempted to reflexively used it, but such imprudence is not allowed before our ambition.
Because I'm yielding it to His Highness to sublimate into a demon and ascend the throne.

I continue to spend everyday changing the souls of the poor who are no different than trash to become artifacts.
The voices of resentment and curses of the poor when their souls are offered to the artifact fill the Holy Grail.

◇

"This pill can produce monster huh?"
"Yes, and as it is a military secret of our Empire, we kindly ask Cardinal-sama to keep it a secret."

The weaselkin merchant brings a box full of small pills on his little fingers.
Used separately, this is nothing more than lowest-grade magic potion, but it changes normal creatures into monsters if you give it to one that has a magic core buried inside its body after it's gone critical state from taking Fiend Drug and then give it magic wave through the activation magic tool.

Getting the fiend drug is a bit hard, but thanks to the help of His Highness, and his accomplice, Honored One, it has become possible to mass produce it in the labyrinth's underground.

With this, we can turn the royal capital into monster paradise like Heki territory.

◇

....What is happening.

For the lower-class noble who was making the Fiend Drug in the labyrinth city to get arrested, and for even the fiend drug that were being transported to the Royal Capital to get seized as well....

"『Mirage』"
"I am here...."
"Disguise yourself as Marquis Kelten, and dispatch『Violet』to the Labyrinth City. Dispose of Sokel before all of the underground fields are found."
"Is it alright if I do not go myself?"
"I do not mind. There should be some demi-humans with wings in『Violet』. Let those people go there."
"As you wish."

I leave the『Disguise』artifact given by Honored One to [Mirage]. If one disguise oneself with this artifact, one cannot be seen through even with Personage Appraisal and Malice Appraisal.

I do not think that it could deceive the appraisal ability of Parion's hero, but that hero should be far in the weaselkin kingdom, chasing after the present demon king.

This is the time of [Union Season] that only happen once in every 666 years.

It's the time of the demon lords revival, the [Great Demon Lords' Season] so to speak.
I have to thank Demon God-sama to have blessed me the fortune of being born in the year of the holy season that hasn't happened since the time of [Golden Wild Boar King] that destroyed Furu Empire.

◇

All of the fiend drug fields in the underground labyrinth have been found by a man who called himself hero's follower.
Moreover, he even unashamedly snatched the noble daughters who were left chastise for the sake of demon possession.

I had stealthily carried away the stored fiend drug in the warehouse of the army headquarter but half of them were confiscated by the authorities.

Right before the drug were all destroyed, [Mirage] who disguised himself as Marquis Kelten stopped it, but most of it had been carried to the Royal Research Institute in order to be disposed.
The real Marquis Kelten has been arrested by the prime minister too, so [Mirage] can't disguise himself as him until the successor is selected.

Yet, my underlings managed to bribe a knight, and we were able to scatter the fiend drug in the underground waterway.
With this, I can simply wait for the right time to sow the seed I got from the weaselkins.

◇

The first experiment was a success.
I was able to change the rat that had eaten fiend-drug absorbing slimes into rat monster by giving it the seed and using the activation tool left by the weaselkins.

The artificial monsters had red-rope patterns, and they displayed strong power and vigorous appetite compared to the common monsters.

....But one problem remains.

"Every monster got debilitated in less than three days and disintegrated."
"Damn weaselkins, to leave us with these defective products..."

Reports from my underling are not favorable.
I cannot turn the royal capital into monster paradise like this.

--It's unavoidable.
Let's prioritize hatching His Highness now.

I instruct my underling to sow the seeds in various places in the royal capital and continue the preparation for the hatching.

Afterward from there, if we get our hands on the Orb, our ambition should come true.

◇

The fire magician who got irritated from the abduction plan of the tigerkin girl that wasn't going well turned one section of the slum into blaze. He's a fool who can't be patience before the more important matter.

--It'd be bad if we are exposed through that guy.

I gave several of my subordinates [Short Horns] and the valuable [Long Horn], and dispatched them to the blazing section of the slum to dispose of the fire magician.
Every one of my underlings that had turned into lesser and mid demons met their ends on the fifth seat of Shiga Eight Swords the gun-user that happened to be there, who also got killed in the process.
How pathetic of them considering he lost his seat to Prince Sharlick the holy sword user.
As I thought, the upstart sublimated demons can't be compared to the natural demons.

Unfortunately, we couldn't find the fire magician in the royal capital afterward.
He probably got caught in the fire he created himself and died.

Two days later, there was a bizarre case where the corpse of a white furred tigerkin soldier in cruel condition was left in front of the gate.
It might be the handiworks of the fire magician in question.
In order to secure his arrest, I'll send Sir Jizon the former temple knight in the royal capital.

◇

"How is the condition of His Highness?"
"Yes, he spend the days uneventfully like usual."

I nod back to my underlings reports.

"I see.... So have you found out the location of the thing from before?"
"It is in the Treasury of the royal castle after all. It's enshrined in the deepest one."

One of my underlings proudly reported the information he got from bribing the vice chief who was in control of cataloging.
I endure not to say that he should have been proud about getting the thing from before--the orb instead.

"Good grief, it has become unthinkably troublesome since we failed at shooting down the airship that was staged to be Duke Bishtal's assassination."
"It was also for disposing the Mithril Explorers to stop them from being headaches in the future, but it was too greedy."
"The plan to steal the orbs under the pretext of helping them was...."
"To do three things at once, this greediness is your fault!"
"If you have to say that, then you're also--"

I strike the tip of bishop's staff I have in my hand to the floor.

"Leave it at that."

I stop the tedious complaints of my underlings, and confirm several things.

"『Mirage』, can you not break into the royal castle?"

"It is impossible. Because normally there is the annoying seal left behind by Ancestor King Yamato...."

If I borrow that person's power, getting the orb is a simple matter, but I cannot give such an odd chore to Honored One. I have to exhaust my resources in order to do it.

◇

....The tactics is underway.
I finished the preparation for the tamed monsters for bombing the obstructive Shiga Eight Swords.
[Mirage] who disguised himself as the Naval General Staff had fed false information to the soldiers of the royal capital's gate, stating that it's for practice.
I have also slipped in Sir Jizon into the banquet in order to exterminate Shiga Eight Swords who escape the attack.

The anxiety of the royal capita's people should be at its peak after the frequent attacks of the monsters.
Judging from the uproar of the ignorant people during the manifestation of the [Dog-head Demon Lord] the other day, they would surely dance as I've predicted on the stage this time.

...The whistling arrow from the megalith far away rang the bell of the beginning.

Now then, dance you people of Royal Capital.
The time for the manifestation of the true demon lord is near.

The Light of Liberty--

●Profiles
【Light of Liberty】Demon Lord believers based in Holy Kingdom Parion.
【Mirage】A member of Light of Liberty. A high level scout that can use holy magic.
【His Highness】An unknown person who has appeared many times in only name.
【Honored One】First appearance. Judging from the Narrator's view point, it's possible that this person is a demon.
【Wings of Freedom】Demon lord believers based in Oyugock Dukedom.
【Previous Earl Bobi】A noble of Oyugock dukedom. Supported Wings of Freedom.
【Fire Magician】Has grudge against tigerkins. It's unknown whether he's the same pyromaniac whom Satou once arrested in Puta Town.
【Dasles】A house name of Makiwa Kingdom's marquis. It has died out now.
【Tigerkin Girl】It's unknown whether she's the same Princess Runya who was being sold in the black market of the Duchy capital.
【Tigerkin Warrior】It's unknown whether slaughtered man is the same person as Sir Galgaoron who saved Princess Runya from the black market.
【Prince Sharlick】Fought the yellow greater demon in Oyugock dukedom into cripple.
【Gun-user of Shiga Eight Swords】The fift seat of Shiga Eight Swords. Killed each other in a fight against a mid demon.
【Marquis Kelten】The noble who's framed. Has srong influence in the military.

【Violet】A military unit formed of crime slaves. Mainly does dirty works.
【Hero's Follower】It's Satou who's disguised himself as Kuro.
【Sokel】An underling noble who was affiliated with the fiend drug manufacture.
【Noble Daughters】Saved from the Lost Thieves by Kuro. Employees of Echigoya Firm.

Skill Table of the Protagonist up until Chapter 12

It's written as: [Name (Skill Level) The chapter where it's acquired].

Skills that have been acquired but not written in the chapter, are written here. I added ※ in the end to distinguish them.

Skill Standards
Lv1....Beginner
Lv3....Standard
Lv5....Expert
Lv7....Master
Lv9....Genius
Lv10....Godly

● Weapon Skill (61p)

Shooting (Lv10) 1-9
Spear (Lv10) 1-9 ◎Went UP from 0 => 10 on 3-8
Bow (——) 1-9
One-Handed Sword (Lv10) 1-9
One-Handed Mace (——) 1-9
Dagger (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from 0 => 10 on 6-2
Throwing (Lv1) 1-9 ▼
Two-Handed Mace (——) 1-9
Two-Handed Sword (——) 1-10
One-Handed Axe (——) 1-10
Two-Handed Axe (——) 1-10
Two-Handed Hammer (Lv10) 1-10 ◎Went UP from 0 => 10 on 3-8
One-Handed Hammer (——) 1-10
Fighting (Lv10) 1-10 ▼

● Physical Battle Skill (255p)

Aiming (Lv10) 1-9
Sniping (Lv10) 1-9
Surprise Attack (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Reckless Courage (——) 1-9
Iai (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Shield (Lv10) 1-9
Evasion (Lv10) 1-9
Parrying (Lv10) 1-9
Shield Bash (Lv5) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 on 6-2
Kicking (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Helmet Splitter (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Air Battle (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Weapon Destruction (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Dual Wielding (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Continuous Attack (Lv10) 3-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Mind's Eye (Lv10) 6-3
Thrusting (Lv10) 6-3
Heavy Blow (Lv10) 6-3
Penetrating (Lv10) 6-3
Magic Edge (Lv10) 6-3
Spiral Spear Strike (Lv10) 6-3
Flash Slash (Lv10) 7-20
Holy Edge (Lv10) 7-21
Foresight: Anti-Personnel Combat (Lv10) 8-23
Magic Edge Cannon (Mana Blast) (Lv10) inbetween 9-29 to 10-3
Armor Penetrate (Lv10) 11-19(new)
Mana Strike (Lv10) 11-19(new)

● Tactics Skill (60P)

Retreat (Lv10) 1-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Cooperation (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Command (Lv10) 2-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Formation (Lv10) 2-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Strategy (Lv10) 2-12 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Provocation (Lv10) 6-13

● Movement Skill (80P)

Dashing (Lv10) 1-4 ※
Jumping (Lv10) 1-4 ※
Three-Dimensional Manuever (Lv10) 1-4 ※
Herculean Strength (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Off-Road (Lv10) 5-14
Sky Drive (Lv10) 7-7
Ground Shrink (Lv10) 7-20
Space Walk (——) 9-23
Flash Drive (Lv10) 9-31

● Magic Skills (150p)

Summoning Magic: Foreign World (Lv10) 1-2
Force Magic: Foreign World (Lv10) 1-2
Prayer (——) 1-4
Lightning Magic: Demon (——) 1-9
Fire Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7
Wind Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7

Lightning Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 8-7
Earth Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7
Water Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 8-7
Ice Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7
Light Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7
Life Magic (Lv10) 2-1
Holy Magic: Parion Belief (——) 2-1
Contract (——) 3-3
Mind Magic (——) 3-4 ※
Shadow Magic (——) 5-9
Force Magic (Lv10) 6-7
Name Order (——) 6-Intermission: Satou's House Name
Gravity Magic: Demon (——) 7-20
Space Magic: Demon (——) 7-20
Destruction Magic: Demon (——) 7-21
Explosion Magic: Demon (——) 7-21
Holy Magic: Tenion Belief (——) 8-26
Flame Magic (Lv10) 8-7
Explosion Magic (Lv10) 8-7
Destruction Magic (Lv10) 8-7
Space Magic (Lv10) Inbetween 8-13~15
Lightning Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10
Dark Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10
Flame Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10
Wind Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10
Forest Magic (——) 9-13
Soul Magic (——) 9-19
Soul Magic: House Fairy (——) 10-18

● Resistance Skills (254p)

Lightning Resistance (Lv10) 1-9
Paralysis Resistance (Lv10) 1-9
Pain Resistance (Lv10) 1-9
Shock Resistance (Lv10) 1-9
Fear Resistance (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv 3 => Lv10 on 12-27
Poison Resistance (Lv10) 1-9
Petrification Resistance (Lv10) 1-9
Fire Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 ◎Went Up from Lv0 => Lv 10 on 3-8
Wind Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Earth Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Water Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Ice Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Light Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Decay Resistance (Lv10) 1-10
Mind Resistance (Lv10) 3-4 ※

Shadow Resistance (Lv10) 5-9
Alcohol Resistance (Lv1) 7-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv1 before Chapter 8
Gravity Resistance (Lv10) 7-20
Space Resistance (Lv10) 7-20
Destruction Resistance (Lv10) 7-21
Explosion Resistance (Lv10) 7-21
Instant Death Resistance (Lv10) 7-22
Dark Resistance (Lv10) 9-10
Stink Resistance (Lv3) 10-29
Life Drain Resistance (Lv10) 11-9 (new)
Curse Resistance (Lv10) 12-26(new)
Chaos Resistance (Lv10) 12-26(new)

● Production Skills (150p)

Woodwork (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 on 6-4
Leathercraft (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 inbetween Chapter 6 and 7
Weapon Creation (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 on 6-10
Blacksmith (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 inbetween Chapter 6 and 7
Compounding (Lv10) 4-9
Alchemy (Lv10) 4-9
Weapon Reinforcement (Lv10) 6-3
Armor Creation (Lv10) 6-4
Sculpture (Lv10) 6-10
Engraving (Lv10) 6-10
Magic Tool Creation (Lv10) 6-10
Bonework (Lv10) 7-12
Glasswork (Lv10) 8-5
Sewing (Lv10) 8-12
Counterfeit (Lv10) 8-21

● Science Skills (111p)

Arithmetic (Lv10) 1-4
Lost Knowledge (——) 1-4
Shiga National Language (Lv10) 1-5
Demon Language (Lv5) 1-9 Went UP from Lv1 => Lv5 on 7-13
Appraisal (Lv10) 2-2 ▼
Inference (——) 2-6
DeRiddle (Lv10) 3-8
Experiment (Lv10) 4-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Inspection (Lv10) 4-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Education (Lv10) 5-2 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Ash Ratkin Language (Lv1) 5-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv1 on 6-2
Green Scalekin Language (Lv1) 5-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv1 on 6-2
Elf Language (Lv10) 5-4 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv10 on 6-10

Dissection (——) 6-2
Etiquette (Lv5) 6-14 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 right before Chapter 7
Social (Lv5) 6-Intermission: Satou's House Name
Heraldry (Lv5) 6-Intermission: Satou's House Name
Decryption (Lv10) 8-26
Tigerkin Language (Lv1) 8-25
Dragon Language (Lv5) 9-10
Silga Language (Lv3) 9-11

● Art Skills (43p)

Singing (——) 1-4 ※
Painting (——) 1-4
Game (——) 1-4
Amplification (Lv3) 2-7 ▼ Went UP from Lv1 => Lv3 on 6-2
Tongue-twister (Lv10) 6-1
Smooth Talking (Lv10) 6-1
Performance (Lv10) 6-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-7
Acting (——) 6-22
Ventriloquism (Lv10) 8-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 9-10
Dance (——) 8-11

● Commerce Skill (70p)

Negotiation (Lv10) 1-5
Excuse (Lv10) 1-5
Estimation (Lv10) 1-6
Haggling (Lv10) 1-6
Poker Face (Lv5) 1-7 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 on 6-2
Nonchalant (——) 1-8
Persuasion (Lv5) 1-8 ▼ Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2
Bribing (Lv5) 1-8 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2
Lip Service (Lv5) 2-3 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2
Tact (Lv10) 6-22 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 inbetween Chapter 6 and Chapter 7

● Labor Skills (75p)

Camping (——) 1-4 ※
Washing (——) 1-4 ※
Reclamation (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-13
Cultivation (——) 1-4
Harvesting (——) 1-4
Mowing (——) 1-4
Lumbering (——) 1-4
Cleaning (——) 1-4
Surveillance (Lv10) 1-7 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Arresting (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Service (——) 3-4
Carrying (——) 4-3
Marshalling (Lv5) 4-6 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2
Packing (——) 5-14
Cooking (Lv10) 6-2
Dismantling (Lv10) 6-2
Picking (Lv10) 6-13
Mounting (Lv10) 6-15
Horse-riding (——) 6-15
Taming (——) 9-26
Training (——) 9-26

● Labyrinth Skill (59p)

Trap Release (Lv10) 2-10 ◎Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 3-8
Trap Usage (Lv5) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 on 6-2
Trap Discovery (Lv10) 2-10
Excavation (Lv10) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Treasure Discovery (Lv10) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Treasure Chest Unlocking (Lv10) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Item Box (Lv4) 3-5 ◎Went UP from Lv2 => Lv4 on 5-2

● Spy Skill (140p)

Deception (Lv10) 1-5
Lip-reading (Lv10) 1-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Attentive Ears (Lv10) 1-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Spy (Lv10) 1-9
QuickDressing (Lv10) 1-10
Disguise (Lv10) 1-10
Behind-the-scene (Lv10) 2-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Abduction (Lv10) 2-6
Assassination (Lv10) 2-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2
Plot (——) 2-6
False Accusation (——) 2-6
Evidence Destruction (Lv10) 6-33
Concealment (Lv10) 7-19
Invisibility (Lv10) 7-19
Tiptoeing (Lv10) 7-19
Strange Voice (Lv10) 8-20

● Magic Power Skills (81p)
Self-Healing (Lv10) 1-9
Magic Operation (Lv10) 6-3
Magic Bestowal (Lv10) 6-3
Magic Healing (Lv10) 6-22

Ghost Seer (Lv1) 7-4
Magic Perception (Lv10) 7-8
Magic Control (Lv10) 9-18
Spirit Light Control (Lv10) 9-18
Spirit Seer (Lv10) 9-18
Magic Armor (Lv10) Used it on Chapter Part 28 - (Acquired on 11-20)

● Specialty Skill (110p)

Condemnation (——) 2-6
Questioning (Lv10) 3-4 Went UP from Lv5 => Lv10 on 9-6
Sex Technique (——) 4-10
Friendly Talk (——) 4-10
Temptation (——) 4-10
Enemy Search (Lv10) 6-3
Crisis Perception (Lv10) 6-3
Space Grasp (Lv10) 6-3
Distant View (Lv10) 6-32
Bird's Eye View (Lv10) 6-32
Telephoto (Lv10) 6-32
Night Vision (Lv10) 7-3
Light Intensity Adjustment (Lv10) 7-3
Pacification (——) 8-22
Survival (Lv10) 9-23
Coercion (Lv10) 10-29 ※It was not described
「」 (——) 12-28 ※A skill that cannot be chosen

・Total Point Used: 1699 points (1421 remaining points)
※Main Character's level has become 312

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●Title List

It's written as the chapter where the title is gotten, and then the title.

1-2 Demon Slayer
1-2 Scalekin Slayer
1-2 Calamity of Scalekin
1-2 Natural Enemy of Scalekin
1-2 Wyvern Slayer
1-2 Dragon Slayer [Lesser]
1-2 Dragon Slayer [Infant Dragon]
1-2 Dragon Slayer [Mature Dragon]
1-2 Dragon Slayer [Elder Dragon]
1-2 Dragon Slayer [※Peculiar Name※] ※Omitted since there are a lot
1-2 Natural Enemy of Dragonkin
1-2 God Slayer

1-4 Ardent Believer

1-10 Combat Ready
1-10 Skilled Warrior
1-10 One who Dances with Demon
1-10 Hero

2-1 One who Pray for the Dead
2-1 One who Saves
2-1 One who Protect Books

2-7 Labyrinth Explorer

2-8 Insect Slayer

2-9 Tamer

2-12 Undead Slayer
2-12 Demon Slayer

3-8 One who Traverses Labyrinth

5-12 Undead King Slayer
5-12 One who Traverses Maze

5-13 Survivor
5-15 Elf's Friend

6-3 Blacksmith of Magic Spear

6-5 Bounty Hunter

6-7 Magician of Dining Table

6-22 Doctor
6-22 Healer
6-22 Saint
6-22 Ham Actor
6-22 Clown

7-4 Blacksmith of Fairy Sword
7-4 Hard Drinker
7-4 Heavy Drinker
7-4 Heavyweight Drinker
7-4 Friend of Dwarf

7-7 Magic Blacksmith
7-7 One who Flies Without Wing

7-22 Demon Lord Slayer
7-22 Demon Lord Slayer [Golden Wild Boar King]
7-22 True Hero
7-22 Unsung Hero

8-14 Magic Sword Blacksmith
8-14 Magic Weapon Blacksmith

8-19 Great Monstrous Fish Slayer
8-19 Illusionist
8-19 Light Art User
8-19 Sky Chef

8-21 Holy Sword Blacksmith
8-21 Counterfeit Artist

8-23 Sword Dancer

Intermission Friend of Orc ※Intermission: Orc Alchemist

9-4 Tribune
9-4 Condemner

9-11 Friend of Black Dragon
9-11 Mountain Crusher
9-11 Hearty Eater
9-11 Big Eater
9-11 Savior
9-11 Worshiped One

9-13 Guest of Forest
9-13 Lover of the Forest Maiden

9-26 Sky Deer Rider

9-31 Fast One
9-31 Conqueror of the Sky

10-29 Natural Enemy of Lost Thief
10-29 Guardian of Order

10-49 Demon Lord Slayer『Dog-head Ancient King』
10-49 Favorite Child of Goddess
10-49 Earth-splitting Magician
10-49 Sky-tearing Magician

11-7 Rescuer
11-7 Fugitive

11-17 Dragon Tamer
11-17 Dragoon

12-28 God Spirit
12-28 One who Violate the Taboo
12-28 Torture King
12-28 Sadist
12-28 Natural Enemy of Heavenly Dragons

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